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GERMANY DRAWDOWN

Facing a cut quandary



Combat? Logistics? For Pentagon, no easy answers on troop reduction

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — President Donald Trump has approved a plan to re-deploy 9,500 troops from Germany, but the move will likely bring added security risks and costs for U.S. taxpayers, former military officials and security analysts say.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper briefed Trump on options this week and what was

approved “not only meets the president’s directive, it will also enhance Russian deterrence, strengthen NATO, reassure allies, improve U.S. strategic flexibility and U.S. European Command’s operational flexibility,” Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said Tuesday.

The Pentagon didn’t explain how the cuts would achieve those benefits. The positive

spin conflicts with reality given the size of the reduction, said retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, the former commander of U.S. Army Europe.

“Just from the math, it is difficult for me to envision how this proposal will do any of what the (Pentagon) statement claims,” Hodges said Wednesday.

The Pentagon hasn’t provided details on what units will be cut or when the plan will

SEE CUTS ON PAGE 4



‘The Outpost’ brings Battle of Kamdesh to big screen

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Movie audiences can experience one of America’s most decorated battles of the ongoing war in Afghanistan as “The Outpost,” a veteran-directed film on the 2009 Battle of Kamdesh, hits theaters and on-demand streaming services July 3.

The battle occurred Oct. 3, 2009, when more than 300 Taliban fighters attacked Combat Outpost Keating, in a remote valley outside of Kamdesh. Outnumbered, about 50 soldiers from Bravo Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, fought for 12 hours as the enemy breached the walls of the outpost until reinforcements arrived. In the end, eight soldiers died and 27 were injured.

There were feats of heroism as well. Then-Spc. Ty Carter and Staff Sgt. Clinton Ronesha received the Medal of Honor and nine others were awarded the Silver Star. Nearly two dozen more received the Bronze Star and 27 received Purple Heart medals.

“This battle was won as a result of very strong leadership on

SEE OUTPOST ON PAGE 7

U.S. soldiers conduct howitzer air assault training at the 7th Army Training Command’s Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, in May.

MARKUS RAUCHENBERGER/U.S. Army

BUSINESS/WEATHER

FedEx reports loss in fiscal fourth quarter

Associated Press

FedEx Corp. flipped to a \$334 million loss in its fiscal fourth quarter, but its revenue and adjusted profit beat Wall Street expectations as the virus pandemic continues to fuel a boom in online shopping.

FedEx's stock rose more than 9% in after-market trading following the results report.

With many U.S. residents staying close to home, online shopping has picked up, and that

helped drive a 20% increase in revenue for FedEx's ground-delivery business.

But deliveries to customers' homes are more costly and not as lucrative as deliveries between businesses, which have fallen sharply as businesses shut down — either temporarily or permanently — since the onset of the pandemic.

Revenue in FedEx's core express-delivery unit fell 10%, and operating income tumbled 56%. There were some bright spots,

however: The Express unit saw an uptick in flights across the Pacific.

Matt Arnold, an analyst for Edward Jones, said the results were "better than feared," with expectations centered around weakness in business-to-business deliveries. Revenue in the ground unit was much stronger than most analysts expected, he said.

FedEx did not offer a prediction about earnings in its fiscal year that started June 1.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (July 2)	\$1.10	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3776
Dollar buys (July 2)	60.8686	British pound	\$1.2426
British pound (July 2)	\$1.21	Canada (Dollar)	1.3579
Japanese yen (July 2)	104.00	China (Yuan)	7.0687
South Korean won (July 2)	1,165.00	Denmark (Krone)	6.6311
		Egypt (Pound)	16.1346
		Euro	\$1.239/0.8888
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7504
		Hungary (Forint)	315.06
		Israel (Shekel)	3.4549
		Japan (Yen)	107.56
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3079
		Norway (Krone)	9.5479
		Philippines (Peso)	48.78
		Poland (Zloty)	3.97
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7512
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3943
		South Korea (Won)	1,201.89
		Switzerland (Franc)	0.9471
		Thailand (Baht)	31.00
		Turkey (Lira)	6.8528

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.25
Federal funds market rate	0.08
3-month bill	0.14
30-year bond	1.41

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MILITARY

Army moving forward with new fitness test

BY STEVE BEYNON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army might have hit another obstacle in its endeavor to replace its long-time physical fitness test as the Senate's version of the defense funding bill calls for a delay in implementing the new Army Combat Fitness Test.

The Senate Armed Services Committee's draft of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, which funds the military, states Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy "may not implement the Army Combat Fitness Test" until a study is completed by an "entity independent of the Department of Defense."

The committee wants the study to determine whether the new fitness test would adversely impact soldiers deployed or stationed in areas with conditions that frequently preclude outdoor training and impact recruitment and retention in support roles such as medical personnel, according to the NDAA draft. Senators and committee staff contacted Tuesday did not respond to questions about the ACFIT provision.

More so, there is no plan by the Army to delay the test at the mo-



DAVID MEYER/U.S. Army

Soldiers from the U.S. Army Medical Command participate their semi-annual physical fitness test in May 2019 at Fort Belvoir, Va.

ment, despite the Senate committee's version of the bill.

"As of today, we're still set for the ACFIT to replace the Army Physical Fitness Test as our organization's test of record this fall," Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said in a statement. "We'll continue to work with our congressional leaders to keep our soldiers ready to answer our nation's call."

The ACFIT is set to be the physical fitness test of record for

the Army on Oct. 1, but scores will not negatively impact troops for the time being, Grinston announced two weeks ago.

Soldiers were expected to start taking the ACFIT for record by Oct. 1, which is the start of the fiscal year, but the coronavirus lockdown and gym closures forced the Army to delay implementation.

The ACFIT eliminates the difference in fitness standards in age and gender, and instead bases standards on a soldier's job. More

physically demanding jobs such as infantry have significantly higher benchmarks to meet versus other jobs. The new standards also come amid more women taking on ground combat roles.

Soldiers take a physical fitness test once a year, and it is a critical part of military careers. The test can dictate whether soldiers progress in their careers or take part in training such as Ranger and air assault school. A failing score could result in removal from the service.

The House Armed Services Committee still must approve its version of the NDAA, with a debate on it set for Wednesday. The 2021 NDAA is not expected to be finalized until the fall. It must be passed by both chambers of Congress by Sept. 30 to provide the Pentagon an on-time budget.

The Army has tentatively set March 2022 for when soldiers must be able to pass the ACFIT.

The ACFIT's six events are leg tucks, deadlifts, a standing power throw, hand-release pushups, a two-mile run, and the sprint-drug-carry. Army officials spent years evaluating tasks soldiers typically do in combat — like loading rounds into cannons or tanks, dragging a wounded com-

rade, or moving across a battlefield — to develop the new test, which they say better correlates to those activities than the decades old, three-event test. The old test replaced two minutes of pushups, two minutes of situps, and a two-mile run.

Grinston said the Army might still tweak the ACFIT and recently made one significant adjustment to the test — adding an alternative test to its leg-tuck event, which primarily tests core strength. The service will allow soldiers who cannot do a leg tuck to instead complete a two-minute plank.

Even beyond unforeseen delays, implementing the new test has tangled the service in a web of logistical issues. Soldiers have long expressed concern about the equipment needed to complete the ACFIT, which includes a hex deadlift bar, a pullup bar, a weight sled, and a medicine ball. Without access to the equipment, they cannot train for all events, troops have said. The issue is more prevalent with some National Guard troops who do not have access to fully equipped gyms or have to pay for costly memberships.

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First Air Force 'Echo Flight' class graduates basic training

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

A group of mostly native Spanish speakers from Puerto Rico recently completed a first-ever Air Force program to provide them English-language training and cultural immersion before basic training.

The 10 men, including one South Korean, were part of a "beta test" of the Echo Flight program, a replica of an Army program that since 1975 has trained prospective soldiers in the language skills needed to join the military.

"Language shouldn't be a barrier to joining our ranks," said Col. Kouji Gillis, commander of the 637th Training Group and commandant of the Defense Language Institute English Language Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas, which runs both the Army and Air Force Echo programs. The airmen graduated from basic training on June 18.

Staffed by over 400 military and civilian employees, the center teaches English language and American culture to international military trainees and domestic students — many of them U.S. citizens or legal residents.

Officials hope the Echo Flight program will help the Air Force and the new Space Force recruit in places like Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory where English isn't the primary language, the service said in a statement last week.

"Echo Flight removes that [language] barrier and allows the Air Force to tap into individuals that can go on to be in much-needed ca-

reer fields, like linguistics," Gillis said.

The first intake of Echo Flight trainees arrived at the language institute in late March, as the coronavirus was spreading across the U.S. After quarantining for two weeks, they began distance learning, the service said.

Initial testing allowed instructors to tailor the curriculum and a later exam gauged what the trainees learned. They also retook the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery to see whether improved language skills led to better scores on that test, which would qualify them for more military specialties. The service did not say whether it had.

The flight graduated the course alongside 11 Echo Company trainees, in a class of 57 students from 20 different countries, the language center said on Facebook.

One of the graduates, Airmen Alexander Piniro-Tulio, who said he joined to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, hopes to work in personnel. Others in his cohort hope to go into specialties such as medical logistics and aircraft metals technology.

"This will help a lot of people in Puerto Rico and around the world," said Airmen 1st Class Eliezer Hernandez Vidal, who already had a bachelor's degree when he enlisted and said he joined in search of "opportunities that I could not have in Puerto Rico."

The Echo Flight opportunity, he said, "is a dream come true."

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Above: Ten airmen prepare to graduate basic military training last month at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. The airmen took part in the Air Force's Echo Flight English-language immersion program at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center. **Left:** Airmen Jose Vasquez-Vera goes through the Leadership Reaction Course last month.

PHOTOS BY SARAYUTH PINTHONG/
U.S. Air Force

EUROPE

Cuts: Reducing troops could bring added security risks, costs

FROM FRONT PAGE

be executed, adding that it would update personnel as planning progresses. While some troops could go to Poland or other locations in Europe, most would be expected to return stateside.

To carry out a mission focused on deterring Russian aggression in Europe and projecting power into the Middle East and Africa—and thus far, the White House and the Pentagon haven't called for changing the mission—the military has relatively few options for getting to Trump's 9,500 troop cut number.

'Salami slice' the force

The worst move would be to take a "salami slice" approach, cutting unit troop strength 30% across the board, said John R. Deni, a U.S. Army War College professor with expertise on European security.

"At some point you risk not having the capacity to do anything day-to-day — no surge capacity, no response capacity," Deni said. National security adviser Robert O'Brien, who has pushed for the cuts, recently called "massive bases in places like Germany" an "obsolete" relic of the Cold War.

During the Cold War, the military had some 250,000 troops in Germany and nearly half a million across Europe. Today, there are about 34,500 troops in Germany, though that number can fluctuate by a few thousand due to movements.

Proponents say bases in the country now serve as streamlined forward operating sites for the 21st century. An across-the-board cut would cripple the force, Hodges said.

"We are so small already, a 30% cut renders them incapable of carrying out their missions," Hodges said. "A 30% cut is in effect a 100% cut."

Cutting combat units

The most straightforward path to 9,500 troops would be to remove firepower, but analysts say that could embolden Russia and limit crisis response capability.

The 2nd Cavalry Regiment in Vilseck is the only brigade-sized ground unit left in Germany and one of only two permanently stationed in Europe after decades of cutbacks. The other is the 173rd Airborne in Italy, which has a detached regiment in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

Sending the regiment back to the U.S. would get the Pentagon to nearly half of Trump's total, but also remove a force that spends much of its time rotating to Poland, just 50 miles from the Russian military exclave of Kaliningrad.

Another option could be to send it to Poland permanently. However, current plans call only for a 1,000-U.S. troop boost there and Poland's support infrastructure would need large, costly upgrades to match Germany's.

The Pentagon also cuts the 52nd Fighter Wing based out of Spangdahlem, which includes a

Where the Pentagon could look to cut in Germany

Getting to 9,500 troops will force military planners to consider large cuts to major commands. Defense Department data from March lists the following numbers by service:

Army: 20,774 Navy: 469 Marines: 441 Air Force: 12,980

More current approximate figures reflect higher numbers based on fluctuations in personnel moves, as troops move between assignments, as well as unit rotations and other factors.



SOURCES: U.S. Army Europe, U.S. Air Forces Europe and Africa (June 2020), DOD Personnel, Workforce Reports and Publications (March 2020).

ANDREA VILLARI/Stars and Stripes



ELLEN C. BRABO/U.S. Army

U.S. soldiers begin to enter a shoothouse at the Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, in August 2019. President Donald Trump has approved a plan to redeploy 9,500 troops from Germany.

squadron of F-16s and support units. The Pentagon's work is nearly done in getting to the 9,500 total.

Hundreds of Navy SEALs and Green Berets that operate out of Stuttgart could be repositioned in Poland — there already is a plan to boost the U.S. special operations mission there — and the cut figure could be met.

Others that could be targeted are recently added short range rocket units with roughly 1,500 soldiers, which the Army had advocated for several years to close a capability gap.

The Pentagon could make up for the loss in Germany by ramping up unit rotations from the U.S. to Europe or putting some in Poland, Deni said.

However, keeping a steady rotational force to complete missions of formerly forward-based units would incur significant costs, said Deni, whose research into large rotations to Europe has found that they add expenses and may take a toll on troop morale.

"It's not evident to me what the easy answer is," Deni said, calling the cuts "really counterintuitive and frankly, fiscally irrespon-

sible. It makes implementing our own strategy far more difficult and far more expensive."

Targeting logistics seen as risky

In Europe, ground units are called upon for high-profile training drills that garner international attention. When the military wanted to send a message to Russia as to its 21st intervention in Ukraine, EUCOM ordered paratroopers into the Baltics and U.S. Army Europe sent the 2nd Cavalry Regiment on a road march up and down NATO's eastern flank.

But the military's core is the Air Force and Army logistical team in the Kaiserslautern Military Community, which Hodges calls the "industrial heart" of EUCOM. Ramstein Air Base is the U.S.'s "largest unsinkable aircraft carrier," he said.

There are about 15,000 troops in the region, but eliminating a large chunk of them could cripple the military, he said. The Army's 21st Theater Sustainment Command resupplies forces all over Europe, including the Baltics and Poland. The Air Force's 86th Airlift Wing is crucial to making things go, not only in Europe but Africa and the Middle East.

"The vast majority of what we have in Germany, when you subtract 2nd Cav and the F-16 squadron, is enablers. It's mission command and defense and all the different types of logistical stuff

that allows you to minimize the amount of force you need to be stationed somewhere," Hodges said. "This is the stuff you need in place to set the theater."

In a crisis, the U.S. would surge forces into Europe and the logistics personnel would make it happen.

"To me, Ramstein, the whole KMC, would be the last thing to go," Deni said.

Cutting command and control

The Pentagon could look to the higher commands in Germany — U.S. European Command and Africa Command — as a way toward 9,500, but the numbers would be small.

AFRICOM has about 1,400 personnel at its headquarters and roughly half are troops. EUCOM is even smaller, with 600 service members and 300 civilians.

They could be moved to the U.S., an idea Congress has flirted with in the past, but ultimately rejected because of high relocation costs.

Proponents have pointed to U.S. Central Command, which is in Tampa, Fla. However, CENTCOM also has large forward-based headquarters in places like Qatar.

It looks easy to move headquarters, but that would ultimately weaken force management, Hodges said.

Some headquarters are already thinly stretched, most notably USAREUR, which has been overwhelmed by the pace of operations in Poland and the Baltics, Deni said.

The Army recently announced the reformation of V Corps — to be based in Kentucky with a forward element in Europe — to help carry the load.

What's next

Even though Trump has approved the drawdown in Germany, it still faces obstacles. There is widespread bipartisan resistance in Congress and lawmakers that include Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., have introduced legislation with the aim of blocking the cuts.

Trump has justified the cutbacks by saying that Germany doesn't invest enough in its own defense and is taking advantage of U.S. security.

While criticisms of allies falling short of their defense spending obligations are fair, Hodges says the U.S. will be at a disadvantage if it denies forces back home.

The military in Germany "is a forward base for us to carry out our national defense strategy," Hodges said. "If not one European country spent a single euro, pound, krone or zloty on defense, that would not change the fact that it is to America's advantage to have a stable, secure, prosperous Europe. It's our biggest trading partner."

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MILITARY

Fort Hood soldier kills self after body is discovered

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — The remains of missing Fort Hood soldier Pfc. Vanessa Guillen have likely been located and another soldier suspected of being involved in her disappearance killed himself Wednesday morning as police approached him, Army Criminal Investigation Command announced.

On Tuesday, Army investigators said they believed the human remains found near the Leon River in Bell County were likely related to the search for Guillen, who has been missing for two months. However, a positive identification is still pending.

"We believe that her remains were found. We believe that the suspect killed himself in the morning. And that, unfortunately doesn't provide us any information about how this happened [or] why a beautiful young soldier is not with us today," Natalie Khawam, attorney for the Guillen family, said Wednesday during a news conference in Washington, D.C.

Guillen, a 20-year-old small arms repairer with the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, has been missing since April 22. She was last seen at work in the armory room of the regiment's engineers' squadron. On that day, Guillen was not scheduled to work, but she was called in by someone, Khawam said.

"We have made significant progress in this tragic situation and are doing everything possible to get to the truth and bring answers to the family of Pfc. Vanessa Guillen," said Chris Grey, the spokesman for Army CID.

The suspect shot himself at 1:17 a.m. Wednesday as officers of the U.S. Marshals Service, Killeen Police Department and the Lone Star Fugitive Task Force attempted to make contact with him in the 4700 block of East Rancier Avenue in Killeen, the central Texas city just outside the gates of Fort Hood.

Identified as a "junior soldier," the man had fled the Army base



Fort Hood/U.S. Army

Remains that likely belong to missing Fort Hood soldier Pfc. Vanessa Guillen were found in a shallow grave east of the Army installation in Texas.

late Tuesday and Army investigators had issued an alert to locate him. When officers approached him, the soldier revealed the weapon and shot himself dead, according to a CID news release.

Another suspect, a civilian, was arrested by the Texas Rangers. The civilian suspect, who was not identified, is the estranged wife of a former Fort Hood soldier and was in custody in the Bell County Jail awaiting charges by civilian authorities, according to CID.

While CID declined to release the name of the dead suspect, Khawam identified the man as Aaron David Robinson.

Robinson was the soldier Guillen told her family was sexually harassing her, Khawam said. It is the name that they gave to authorities when they visited the base last week for a meeting with Fort Hood commanders.

Mayra Guillen, Vanessa's sister, said Wednesday that when she first went to Fort Hood in April to look for her sister, she met Robinson.

"I met him, not knowing that he had something to do with it," she said. "I felt something was telling me that he did something and I wasn't wrong apparently. He still had the nerve that same day

to laugh in my face. Apparently now he kills himself. Why? I don't know. But whoever is responsible has to pay."

Mayra Guillen spoke alongside Khawam and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, D-Hawaii, during the news conference in Washington. The Guillen family, who are from Houston, traveled to the capital this week to ask Congress for an inquiry into the handling of Vanessa's case and Fort Hood.

"We demand a congressional investigation," she said. "I need everyone's help to keep the story alive because they claim sexual harassment, apparently to me, it is not important. What about now? Because it led up to this."

Khawam said she believes it necessary for Congress to intervene because when the Army investigates its own actions, it's not as reliable.

The attorney called for legislation in Guillen's name to create a third-party agency for soldiers to go to in order to report sexual harassment and assault. While Guillen had reported the instances of sexual harassment to her family, she did not go to her unit, because the perpetrator was her superior and she feared reprisal, Khawam said.

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BRANDON ESAU/U.S. Air Force

Air Force Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson, left, of the 100th Security Forces Squadron at RAF Mildenhall, England, died Saturday at his off-base home, a base official said Wednesday.

US airman found dead in off-base residence in UK

Stars and Stripes

The Air Force is investigating the death of a security forces airman assigned to RAF Mildenhall in England who was found unresponsive at his home over the weekend, a base official said Wednesday.

Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson was found in his off-base residence late Saturday night by fellow airmen who were "expecting to see him that day," said Capt. Shelley Spreier, a spokeswoman for the Mildenhall-based 100th Air Refueling Wing.

The airmen tried unsuccessfully to resuscitate Johnson, Spreier said.

An autopsy is being conducted at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany but has not yet determined the cause of

death, she said.

Johnson joined the Air Force in October 2013. He was assigned to Osan Air Base, South Korea, in 2014, according to a post on his Facebook page. At the time of his death, he was a controller with the 100th Security Forces Base Defense Operations Center at Mildenhall, which is home to the 100th Air Refueling Wing.

"This is a tragic loss for Team Mildenhall," 100th ARW commander Col. Troy Pananon said in a statement.

"SSgt Jeremiah Johnson was a Defender, flight leader, mentor, and friend to all he came in contact with — a dedicated Airman and professional. Our deepest condolences go out to SSgt Johnson's family, friends — and our Defenders of the 100th Security Forces Squadron," he said.

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Air Force pilot dies after F-16 crashes at SC base

Stars and Stripes

The pilot of an Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon was killed following a crash late Tuesday at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

The jet, which was assigned to the 20th Fighter Wing and had only the pilot on board, crashed at approximately 11:30 p.m., according to a statement posted early Wednesday on the base's official Facebook page.

The pilot's name is being with-

held until 24 hours after the family is notified, according to a later statement announcing the death.

"We ask for your patience and to avoid speculation until we release more information," the statement said.

Smartphone video posted to a popular Air Force social media site purported to show the aircraft ablaze as emergency workers responded to the accident.

news@stripes.com

MILITARY

New leader takes over 31st MEU

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Command of the nation's only permanently forward deployed, seaborne quick reaction force is in the hands of a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan with a career in light armored reconnaissance, the Marine Corps announced Monday.

Marine Col. Michael Nakonieczny of Buena Park, Calif., took over the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit from outgoing commander Col. Robert Brodie on June 25. The change of command took place privately at Camp Hansen to accommodate coronavirus prevention measures, according to the Marine statement.

"To the Marines of the 31st MEU, I have watched you with great enthusiasm and I am so eager to join your team," Nakonieczny said during the ceremony, according to the statement.

"Col. Brodie, I have watched you take it to the next level," he said. "I vow to you that I will do my best to exploit the initiative that you have set for this MEU, and I will love these Marines like my family."

The 31st MEU is composed of roughly 2,200 Marines and sailors operating off Navy ships from Amphibious Squadron 11, based in Sasebo, Japan. The unit is the premier crisis response element for the III Marine Expeditionary Force.

The unit is able to project power throughout the Indo-Pacific region, is "flexible and lethal," and ready to perform a wide range of military operations at a moment's notice, Brodie has said in past statements.

Brodie, a career F/A-18 Hornet pilot, leaves the 31st MEU after

two years and four full-unit deployment cycles, which included bilateral training and exercises alongside Japanese, Thai, Filipino and Australian troops, the statement said.

In late 2018, the unit took part in relief operations in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in the wake of Typhoons Mangkhut and Yutu.

"We have done a lot of innovative things," Brodie said at the ceremony, according to the Marine statement. "I think it has prepared this MEU to respond to crises whether high-end or helping people out."

Nakonieczny comes to the 31st MEU from a position as director of concepts and plans for the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory at Quantico, Va.

After graduating from the University of California at Davis and receiving his commission in 1997, Nakonieczny commanded various platoons and companies, deploying in 2001 to Frankfurt, Germany, with Company H, Marine Security Guard Battalion, a Marine biography states. He served there as the company's operations and later executive officer.

In 2004, he assumed command of Company A, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and deployed to Iraq, according to the biography. Nakonieczny also commanded the 1st Marine Division headquarters battalion and its 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

He served as executive officer of 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, and deputy director of 13 Afghanistan, U.S. Special Operations Command, his biography states. He has deployed several times with Marine expeditionary units.

Brodie will remain on Okinawa as the III MEF G-3, assistant chief of staff for operations, 31st MEU spokesman Capt. George McArthur wrote in an email Wednesday to Stars and Stripes.

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RICHARD EBENSBERGER/U.S. Air Force

Hundreds of paratroopers assigned to U.S. Army Alaska jump onto Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, on Tuesday as part of a training mission.

Alaska-based paratroopers drop on Guam in show of readiness

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

About 350 soldiers parachuted into Andersen Air Force Base on Tuesday to complete a training mission that began with a marathon flight from Alaska.

Five C-17 Globemasters flew the paratroopers from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska to Guam, where they secured the air base as part of an emergency deployment readiness exercise, the Army said in a statement Tuesday.

The soldiers are with the 25th Infantry Division's 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team — the Army's only Pacific airborne brigade. They learned of the mission several days before the jump, the Army said.

"This scenario tested our ability to execute real-world missions and demonstrated that we are capable of deploying anywhere in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area at a moment's notice," Col. Christopher Landers, commander of the 4th Brigade, said in the statement.

The coronavirus pandemic has challenged the military's ability to train in groups and conduct missions involving travel.

The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt was sidelined in Guam for about six weeks this spring to

deal with an outbreak that infected more than 1,150 crew members.

More recently, 35 airmen who arrived in Guam on May 25 subsequently tested positive for the virus and were quarantined on the air base.

"We wanted to show that despite [the coronavirus] going on we can still really answer any call that comes our way, that we have the ability to do that — and still be tactically proficient no matter what the situation is," U.S. Army Alaska spokesman Maj. Charlie Dietz said Tuesday in a phone interview.

Prior to leaving Alaska, all personnel involved in the mission were screened for COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, he said.

The paratroopers were expected to return to Alaska within a day of landing.

The soldiers were tested for the virus throughout the preparation process and will remain separated from Andersen personnel during their short stay, Dietz added.

"There have been no cases that have come back positive," he said. "They're kind of in a bubble, and they're not interacting with anybody that isn't part of their group."

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Bill would ban DOD from buying products with PFAS

By STEVE BEYNON
Stars and Stripes

A Senate bill introduced Monday aims to prohibit the Department of Defense from buying items that contain toxic chemicals known as PFAS.

Two Armed Services Committee senators, Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., and Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., introduced the PFAS Free Military Purchasing Act, which would prohibit the DOD from buying items which

contain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, including household products, floor wax, sunscreen and other everyday items. A similar law has been introduced in the House.

"PFAS chemicals have found their way into not only our water systems, but also everyday supplies including food packaging, cosmetics and many other household items," Shaheen said in a statement.

"This legislation would help protect our service members and

their families from exposure by prohibiting the Department of Defense from procuring items that contain these harmful contaminants," she said.

While the bill deals with household products, toxic PFAS chemicals have also been found in firefighting foam, which the military has used for decades. The foam has been found to contaminate groundwater and well water around military bases.

Recent data from the Environmental Working Group found 28

bases with PFAS levels in drinking water at levels above some state standards.

Shaheen authored a provision in government funding legislation last year banning the toxic foam after 2024.

The senators pointed to a statement from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry in June raising concerns that high exposure to PFAS chemicals could compromise the immune system and make individuals weaker against coronavirus.

PFAS are found in a wide range of consumer products that have been used since the 1940s and have been found in cookware, pizza boxes, dental floss and stain repellents. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, PFAS chemicals can cause harm to the immune system, impact infant birth weights, cause cancer or disrupt thyroid hormone production.

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MILITARY

Outpost: Battle raged for 12 hours, as 50 US troops were outnumbered 6-1

FROM FRONT PAGE

the ground and very strong character embedded into these men," said Rod Lurie, director of "The Outpost," and 1984 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. "The leadership at the ground level, in the captains and below, was absolutely extraordinary."

Lurie, who directed "The Last Castle" and "Straw Dogs," said he is energized by movies of leadership, character and principle, and was immediately drawn to that element of the battle.

"In this particular battle, their only mission was to survive. The mission of the base eventually became just stay alive. That is how it ended," he said. "Eight men died in this battle, but 46 survived and it was due to the leadership, but also the fact that every man died trying to save another man."

"We learn much more about ourselves by what we are willing to die for as opposed to what we are willing to kill for. That is a lesson that I really learned as I was making this film," he said.

To recreate the terrain of COP Keating — in a lush, jungle-like valley surrounded by steep mountains near the Pakistan border — Lurie found a quarry in Bulgaria where he rebuilt the base. Veterans of the battle helped bring their experiences to life, including Carter, who left the Army as a staff sergeant in 2014.

"It did bring back a lot of memories. There was an off-putting eerie feeling," Carter said of the set. He served as a military adviser and co-producer. "A couple times I got emotional just watching or seeing the replay on the screen."

Though Carter has a small acting role in the film, his actions in battle are portrayed on screen by actor Caleb Landry Jones. Romesha, fellow Medal of Honor recipient, is portrayed by Scott Eastwood.

In a way, Carter said seeing the filming was a form of therapy. "You watch somebody else do it over and over again, it removes the anxiety," he said.

Fellow veterans of COP Keating Stoney Fortis, Christopher Cordova, Daniel Rodriguez and Henry Hughes also spent time

The fallen

Eight men died in the Battle of Kamdesh. These are their ranks at the time of the battle; several were posthumously promoted.

- Sgt. Justin Timothy Gallegos
- Spc. Christopher Todd Griffin
- Sgt. Joshua Mitchell Hardt
- Sgt. Joshua John Kirk
- Spc. Stephan Lee Mace
- Sgt. Vernon William Martin
- Spc. Michael Patrick Scusa
- Pfc. Kevin Christopher Thomson

on set, Lurie said. Hughes was a co-producer and actor in the film, portraying Brad Larson. Rodriguez portrays himself in the movie. During the battle he was in the mortar pit when Pfc. Kevin Thomson died — the first of eight deaths.

"He had to recreate the death of his best friend for us to watch," Lurie said.

There is no shying from death — or its impact on survivors — to recreate such a bloody battle. That challenge nearly caused Lurie to walk away from the project after his 27-year-old son, Hunter Lurie, died suddenly of a blood clot in 2018. The movie is dedicated to him in the closing credits.

"I didn't know if I would be able to make the film," he said, noting the closeness in age of his son and the men who died at COP Keating. Most of them have surviving family members who continue to grieve the loss. "What I did know is how to film their deaths because if somebody were to make a movie about the death of my son, I wouldn't want to have sweet music. I wouldn't want to have it glamorized. I would just want the world to see exactly how he died with the precise fanfare in which he died, because that would be the most respectful thing."

With the encouragement of his daughter, Lurie said he was able to return to the movie.

"The deaths in the middle of battle are matter of fact, because you can't stop and sort of memorialize the moment of somebody's death. You have to move on," Lurie said. "They are killed with the indifference of war in our film."

The movie does take liberty



PHOTOS BY SIMON VARSANO/Screen Media

Above: Rod Lurie, an Army veteran, directs Caleb Landry Jones during filming of "The Outpost." Below, center: Scott Eastwood portrays Medal of Honor recipient Clinton Romesha. Below right: Landry Jones portrays Medal of Honor recipient Ty Carter in the film, which premieres in select theaters and on-demand on Friday.



with the way it portrays previous commanders of the outpost, 1st Lt. Ben Keating and Capt. Robert Yllescas. Keating died while serving at the base in 2006 and it was later named in his honor. He is played by Orlando Bloom in the movie.

Yllescas died there in 2008 and is portrayed by Milo Gibson. Their stories are the first half of the movie and help build the narrative of the poor placement of the outpost and how closely the enemy observed the base.

"It was one of the great follies of the military that these outposts were ever created," Lurie said. Created for counterinsurgency to stem the flow of weapons from Pakistan, it was "a death trap."

"This outpost was placed in a really godforsaken place," he said.

In the months that followed the Battle of Kamdesh, two Army officers were disciplined for "inadequate planning" in setting up



the base and reacting to reports of planned attacks.

CNN anchor Jake Tapper wrote a book about the COP Keating titled, "The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor," published in 2012, which spanned the history of the base. He helped transform the 500-page book into a script that included Keating and Yllescas and fit into a 123-minute film.

"Putting them into this narrative required playing with time and taking liberties with the fact that [they] did not serve with guys from 3-61," said Tapper, who discussed the rewriting in real time with veterans and families through a private Facebook group. "In this case, the desire was to honor [Keating and Yllescas] and illustrate how dangerous

it was at COP Keating."

Tapper noted there were other soldiers who died at the base over the years it existed, but he was just not able to write them into the script. "It's sad that they're not," Tapper said. "There's no right decision."

Families previewed the film in late 2019 with the expectation it would premiere at the South by Southwest Film Festival in March. However, because of the coronavirus pandemic, the festival was canceled.

"The Outpost" will be released July 3 in select theaters, but also is available for purchase at home through most on-demand streaming services, only in the United States.

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SIMON VARSANO/Screen Media

Taylor John Smith and Orlando Bloom portray soldiers in the "The Outpost," which is based on the Battle of Kamdesh.

MILITARY

White House defends handling of bounty intel

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is stepping up the defense of its response to intelligence assessments that suggested Russia had offered bounties for killing U.S. troops in Afghanistan, with the president's national security adviser saying on Wednesday he had prepared a list of retaliatory options if the intelligence had been corroborated.

President Donald Trump continued to play down the assessments and insist he wasn't briefed on the matter because the intelligence didn't rise to his level. However, National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien said both the CIA and Pentagon did pursue the lead and briefed international allies.

"We had options ready to go," O'Brien said on "Fox and Friends." "It may be impossible to get to the bottom of it."

At a State Department news conference, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the situation was handled "incredibly well" to ensure the safety of U.S. troops.

"We took this seriously, we handled it appropriately," Pompeo said, without giving additional details. He said the administration receives intelligence about threats to Americans "every single day" and that each is assessed.

Pompeo added that Russian activity in Afghanistan is nothing new and that Russia is just one of many nations acting there. He said that Congress has had similar information in the past, and that he often receives threat assessments that don't rise to the level of a presidential briefing.

The comments from administration officials come as Trump is coming under increasing pressure from lawmakers of both parties to provide more answers about the intelligence and the U.S. response or lack of one. Democrats who were briefed at the White House on Tuesday suggested Trump was bowing to Russian President Vladimir Putin at the risk of U.S. soldiers' lives.

Trump remained defensive about the intelligence, dismissing stories about it as "Fake News" made up to "damage me and the Republican Party."

The president has repeatedly said he wasn't briefed on the assessments that Russia offered bounties because there wasn't corroborating evidence. Those assessments were first reported by the New York Times, then confirmed by The Associated Press by American intelligence officials and others with knowledge of the matter.

O'Brien said the intelligence wasn't brought to Trump's attention initially because it was unverified and there was no consensus among the intelligence community. But it's rare for intelligence to be confirmed without a shadow of doubt before it is presented to senior government decision-makers.

The national security adviser echoed the recent White House talking point faulting not Rus-

President vows veto if bill seeks new base names

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is vowing to veto a massive defense bill to keep military bases such as Fort Bragg, N.C., named after Confederate officers, swimming against sentiment in his own party and imperiling a 3% pay raise for the troops.

Trump took to Twitter late Tuesday to threaten a veto of a \$741 billion annual Pentagon authorization bill because it would require a host of military bases named after Confederate figures to be renamed within three years.

Trump rival Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., won a bipartisan vote in a GOP-controlled panel to force the bases to be renamed and it's clear that opponents of the idea don't have the votes to remove it during floor debate.

"I will Veto the Defense Authorization Bill if the Elizabeth 'Pocahontas' Warren (of all people!) Amendment, which will lead to the renaming (plus other bad things!) of Fort Bragg, Fort Robert E. Lee, and many other Military Bases from which we won Two World Wars, is in the Bill!" Trump wrote on Twitter. Trump's threat comes as he is increasingly appealing to his core supporters as his troubled reelection campaign has fallen behind former Vice President Joe Biden in opinion polls.

The response by top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer? Make my day.

"I dare President Trump to veto the bill over Confederate base naming. It's in the bill. It has bipartisan support. It will stay in the bill," Schumer said.

The annual measure has passed every year for almost six decades and typically enjoys

as much government leakers and the media for making the matter public.

Senate Republicans appeared split on the matter, with several defending the president and saying that the Russian meddling wasn't new. Others expressed strong concern.

"If reports are true that Russia has been paying a bounty to the Taliban to kill American soldiers, this is a serious escalation," Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley said on the Senate floor. "It demands a strong response, and I don't mean a diplomatic response."

Earlier in the week, Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Nebr., said Congress needed to find out who knew what when, and if Trump didn't know, "how the hell not?"

House Democrats who were briefed at the White House on Tuesday questioned why Trump wouldn't have been briefed sooner and pushed White House offi-



ALEX BRANDON/AP

President Donald Trump departs after speaking about the PREVENTS "President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide" task force at the White House last month. Trump vowed Tuesday to veto a massive defense bill unless it keeps military bases such as Fort Bragg, N.C., named after Confederate officers.

veto-proof support, though various controversies often mean that it does not pass until late in the year. Trump's salvo probably ensures that the issue won't come to a head until after the November election.

The Senate Armed Services Committee approved Warren's measure to force the bases to be renamed within three years by a voice vote last month. A commission would be set up to oversee the process.

Since the Senate's 45 Democrats and two Democratic-aligned Independents are behind the provision, GOP opponents of the idea would have to — at a minimum — summon

50 of the chamber's 53 Republicans to replace it if everyone votes and Vice President Mike Pence is available to break a tie. As a practical matter it would take 60 votes under filibuster rules.

That means that opponents of Warren's provision like Sens. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., a top Trump acolyte, and Thom Tillis, R-N.C., face impossible odds during floor debate. The chamber is debating the bill now but won't finish it until later this month.

"Instead of mandating the renaming of military bases, including Fort Bragg, we need a thoughtful and constructive

process that includes the input of our military communities," said Tillis.

Top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell, of Kentucky, says he won't fight the Warren amendments and that he is "OK" with whatever negotiators on the measure ultimately decide on the issue. That's a view generally shared by top House Republican Kevin McCarthy, of California.

A Democratic-controlled House panel is holding a day-long drafting session Wednesday in which it is sure to address the topic.

Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson, chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, said Trump "can't be made aware of every piece of unverified intelligence."

Similarly, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he didn't think Trump should be "subjected to every rumor."

The White House was working to schedule a briefing with the so-called Gang of 8 in Congress — McConnell, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the top Republicans and Democrats on the two intelligence committees. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, according to people familiar with the scheduling who spoke on condition of anonymity because the information hadn't been released publicly.

While Russian meddling in Afghanistan isn't new, officials said Russian operatives had become more aggressive in their desire

to contract with the Taliban and members of the Haqqani Network, a militant group aligned with the Taliban in Afghanistan and designated a foreign terrorist organization in 2012.

The intelligence community has been investigating an April 2019 attack on an American convoy that killed three U.S. Marines when a car rigged with explosives detonated near their armored vehicles as they traveled back to Bagram Airfield, the largest U.S. military installation in Afghanistan, officials told the AP.

Three other U.S. service members were wounded in the attack, along with an Afghan contractor. The Taliban claimed responsibility. The officials the AP spoke to also said they were looking closely at insider attacks from 2019 to determine if they were linked to Russian bounties.

MILITARY

'Deltas' replacing wings for Space Force

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The new Space Force has streamlined its structure by getting without wings.

Instead, the intermediate echelons above squadrons in the country's newest military branch will be known as "deltas," and they will be led by whatever the service decides to call its equivalent of a colonel.

Deltas will fall under field commands like Space Operations Command, or SpOC — an abbreviation that may keep it from being confused for other services' special operations commands, if not the Vulcan from "Star Trek." The field commands report to the service headquarters.

The use of three echelons instead of the five levels used by its parent service, the Air Force, reflects a focus on being "lean, agile and mission-focused," the service said in a statement Tuesday.

Innovation and efficiency are driving our mission as we position the Space Force to respond

'Innovation and efficiency are driving our mission as we position the Space Force to respond with agility to protect our nation's space capabilities and the American way of life.'

Barbara Barrett
U.S. Air Force secretary

with agility to protect our nation's space capabilities and the American way of life," Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett said in the statement.

What's the difference between the branches' field commands

and the Air Force major commands fall under the service headquar-

ters, followed by numbered air forces, wings, groups, squadrons and flights. Space Force eliminates one command level headed by a general and one headed by a colonel-equivalent.

The service, which will draw thousands of airmen, is expected to grow to 15,000 personnel, though it has still not announced what it will call its members or what many of its rank titles will be.

Deltas were named after the triangular symbol frequently used in space logos, Air Force Magazine reported. They will be organized to support individual functions such as operations, base support or training.

Space Force squadrons will operate similarly to their Air Force counterparts, focusing on missions like satellite operations or intelligence, the magazine reported.

The structure brings together various former Air Force space-related units under the new branch, which was created in December in response to increased

commercial and military use of space.

"This is an historic opportunity to launch the Space Force on the right trajectory to deliver the capabilities needed to ensure freedom of movement and deter aggression in, from and to space," said Gen. Jay Raymond, the service's top officer.

Headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., and led by a three-star general, SpOC will be one of three field commands with specific mission focuses, along with Space Training and Readiness Command — STARCOM for short — and Space Systems Command, abbreviated as SSC.

SpOC will be the main provider of forces to combatant commanders, coalition partners and the joint force, the service said. An existing unit of the same name, based at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., will be renamed once SpOC gets off the ground, slated for later this summer.

Also activating this year is SSC, headed by a three-star, which will oversee science and technol-

ogy activities and manage development, acquisition and fielding of "lethal and resilient space capabilities," the service said. It will also handle launch, testing, sustainment and maintenance on space systems.

SSC will be built from existing acquisition and development organizations, including Space and Missile Systems Center, the Commercial Satellite Communications Office and other space programs within DOD.

STARCOM, which will train and educate Space Force personnel, will be led by a two-star and is expected to stand up in 2021. In the meantime, a Space Training and Readiness Delta will be stood up in July at Peterson and will oversee related units transferring into the service.

"This is the most significant restructuring of space units undertaken by the United States since the establishment of Air Force Space Command in 1982," Barrett said.

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Australia to up military funding, buy Navy missile

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Australia will spend \$186 billion to build a bigger and more aggressive military equipped with long-range and hypersonic missiles, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced Wednesday.

A 10-year plan, outlined during a livestreamed speech at the Australian Defence Force Academy, includes working with the United States to develop missile defense for deployed forces and acquiring long-range missiles to protect shipping lanes.

It also calls for Australian military satellites, new drones, enhanced cyber capabilities and an underwater surveillance system.

The plan will take annual defense spending beyond 2% of GDP, Morrison said.

Morrison said his nation faces "the most challenging times since the 1930s and early 1940s."

The nation must prepare for a post-pandemic world that is poorer, more dangerous and more disorderly, he said.

"The Indo-Pacific is the epicenter of rising strategic competition," Morrison said. "It is the focus of the dominant global contest of our age."

Tensions over territorial claims are rising across the region from the South China Sea to the East China Sea and the border between China and India, he said.

Meanwhile, military capabilities are expanding, coercive activities are rife, and technology is enabling more disinformation and cyber interference, Morrison added.

"The rest of the world and Aus-

tralia are not just bystanders to this," he said. "We are undertaking the biggest regeneration of our navy since the Second World War and have chartered the transition to a fifth-generation Air force."

Morrison promised to boost the military's ability to deal with "gray zone" activity against Australia's interests that falls below the threshold of traditional armed conflict.

Australia will purchase the AGM-158C Long Range Anti-Space Missile from the U.S. Navy at a cost of \$553 million, The Australian newspaper reported Tuesday. The missile has a range of more than 230 miles compared to the 77-mile range of Australia's 1980s-era AGM-84 air-launched Harpoon anti-ship missile.

Up to \$6.42 billion will also be spent on research and development into high-speed, long-range weapons, including hypersonic weapons, the newspaper reported.

A further \$6.91 billion to \$11.75 billion will be spent on fighter aircraft, suggesting Australia may expand its Joint Strike Fighter program involving the F-35 Lightning II, according to the newspaper.

Australia is also looking at acquiring the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, a light multiple rocket launcher developed in the late 1990s for the U.S. Army, the newspaper reported.

A massive underwater surveillance system using high-tech sensors costing between \$3.45 billion and \$4.83 billion is one of the biggest new purchases that could eventually also include un-



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

An Australian soldier patrols with U.S. Marines in 2019 during the Talisman Sabre exercise in Queensland, Australia. The U.S. ally said Wednesday it will spend \$186 billion to build a bigger military.

manned submarines, the newspaper reported.

The plan is a hardening of Australia's strategic position and mirrors a hardening of the U.S. position, Paul Buchanan, an American security analyst based in Auckland, New Zealand, said in an email Wednesday.

"The US makes no bones about the fact that China is considered to be the prime adversary in the Western Pacific," he said. "The Australians feel the same."

Australia and other states in the region are reacting to China's actions, Buchanan said.

"[The Chinese] have been

very provocative and have really pushed the envelope of toleration amongst their neighbors," he said.

The Australian defense boost puts the Chinese on notice that they will not be able to project power unimpeded, Buchanan added.

"They are going to ring fence China as much as possible," he said. "At least the Australians will have the assets to make it very costly for China to do military progression in the Southwest Pacific."

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Germany disbands elite unit

Associated Press

BERLIN — Germany's defense minister disbanded a company of special forces on Wednesday, saying a culture of right-wing extremism had been allowed to develop behind a "wall of secrecy."

Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer told reporters that "toxic leadership" in the company was found to have fostered an extreme right attitude among some members of the Kommando Spezialkräfte unit. Some of the 70 soldiers in the unit will be distributed among the KSK's other three combat companies, while "those who made clear they are part of the problem and not part of the solution must leave the KSK," she said.

Kramp-Karrenbauer emphasized, however, that she felt reform was the right course rather than the dissolution of the entire unit, saying "we need the KSK."

The majority of the men and women in the KSK and in the Bundeswehr as a whole are loyal to our constitution," she said.

The KSK was formed as an army unit in 1996 with a focus on anti-terrorism operations and hostage rescues from hostile areas.

Military investigators have been looking into the unit since a group of German broadcasters reported in 2017 that at a going-away party, members displayed the Hitler salute, listened to right-wing extremist music and participated in a game that involved tossing a pig's head.

VIRUS OUTBREAK



AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA/Stars and Stripes

Tourists stroll through Chinatown in Yokohama, Japan, in March.

Yokosuka Naval Base loosens restrictions for holiday weekend

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The base commander here further eased coronavirus travel restrictions on sailors, civilian employees and their families Wednesday, opening up more of Japan for trips as Independence Day weekend approaches.

Personnel from the base may explore Yokohama, previously off-limits, and the neighboring prefectures of Shizuoka and Yamaguchi to the southwest and west, respectively, and stay in off-base hotels, according to the order signed by base commander Capt. Rich Jarrett.

The city of Kawasaki, north of Yokohama, and Tokyo, however, are still off-limits.

Also, crowded off-base venues such as bars and nightclubs, gyms, amusement parks and swimming pools are prohibited, along with tattoo parlors. Other venues, such as theaters, concert halls, karaoke clubs and similar places remain off-limits.

With the expanded liberty area comes permitted activities like shopping and dining in at restaurants. Jarrett's order requires base personnel to wear masks

where social distancing is not possible and to adhere to other hygiene practices.

The news arrives in time for the four-day Independence Day holiday. The new boundaries allow access to regional outdoor and historic attractions such as Mount Fuji, Hakone and Hamamatsu Castle, where Tokugawa Iyeyasu, founder of the last shogunate in Japan, once lived.

Navy spouse Ahoefa Adjowa, who plans to buy Krispy Kreme donuts and Lush Cosmetics products in Yokohama over the weekend, said she appreciates the chance to explore Japan while stationed abroad.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, so it's important to travel outside Yokosuka," she said on Wednesday. "Japan has so much to offer; let's all go out and embrace the diversity."

Yokosuka on Wednesday also opened the Purdy Gym to civilian employees, family members and other users, according to the official base Facebook page. Active duty may continue to use the Fleet Recreation Center's gym.

Jarrett's order is a conservative move compared to a decision Friday by U.S. Army Japan to allow

its personnel to travel throughout most of Honshu, the main island of Japan.

The Army, however, put Tokyo, Yokohama and the northern island prefecture of Hokkaido off-limits. The commander at Yokota Air Base issued a similar order on Tuesday. Compared to the United States, Japan has fared well during the global pandemic.

While nearly 2.6 million tested positive for coronavirus in the U.S. as of Tuesday, fewer than 18,600 people had tested positive in Japan since the outbreak's start, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare.

As of Tuesday, about 126,700 coronavirus patients had died in the U.S., while fewer than 1,000 in Japan had died, according to the data.

Still, base commanders encourage caution in public. Across U.S. Forces Japan, face masks, physical distancing and frequent handwashing remain required, according to health protection guidance.

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Sailors, Marines can visit bars and eateries on Guam, but airmen are still restricted

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

An order prohibiting sailors, Marines and Coast Guard personnel from visiting bars and eating inside restaurants to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in Guam was lifted Tuesday.

The restriction had been ordered by Rear Adm. John Menoni, commander of Joint Region Marianas, the entity that administers the territory's military installations.

In a memo Tuesday, Menoni said that although Guam was still in a public health emergency due

to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the situation had improved enough to lift the ban.

"Through successful exercise of personal responsibility and careful compliance with social distancing, hygiene and face mask requirements, we have mitigated the threats posed by a spike in positive [coronavirus] cases beginning earlier this month," he said.

Remaining in place is a June 18 order from Andersen Air Force Base restricting movement for service members who are permanently or temporarily assigned to

that installation.

It requires those personnel to limit travel to essential trips, such as for grocery shopping or commuting to work. Service members violating the order will be subject to action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Guam has had 267 confirmed coronavirus cases as of Wednesday, with 46 of those infections being military service members, according to Guam government statistics. Five people have died from the disease.

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90 of 110 troops at Fort Bragg course have tested positive

Stars and Stripes

More than 100 troops in an Army course that teaches survival in remote and isolating conditions were quarantined this week after most of them tested positive for the coronavirus.

The outbreak at the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape course at the Army's Fort Bragg, N.C.-based John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, was first reported in The New York Times.

Out of 110 participants, 82 students and eight training instructors tested positive, Janice Burton, a spokeswoman for the school, told Military.com. The course was halted and all 110 were being quarantined for 14 days, she said.

"We have 2,400 students training here every day at SWCS and that [90] is the only sick population we have," she said.

Students are isolated for 14 days prior to attending any course at the special operations school, Burton told the website. If they test positive, they are quarantined for another two-week period.

The infected students were six hours from completing the six-week SERE course, which is conducted at Camp Mackall, a

satellite training area miles from Bragg, Army Times reported. The next class won't start again until July 13, Burton told the newspaper.

"We were already heading into a natural break with the 4th of July weekend, so we've extended that out further," Burton said.

The course is generally limited to Army special operations troops whose jobs may take them behind enemy lines. Students learn how to survive in austere conditions, evade enemy patrols, resist exploitation if captured and escape from their captors.

Course participants are "naturally isolated" from other students in different courses, Army Times reported, citing an SWCS statement.

So far, none of the coronavirus cases at the school have led to hospitalizations, Burton told the newspaper.

Health and welfare of the students and staff is the top priority, Maj. Gen. Patrick Robinson, the school's commandant said in the SWCS statement.

"We will do everything we can to protect our students and their families," Robinson said.

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Osan Air Base confirms cases, but says health alert level unchanged

By KIM GAMEL
AND MATTHEW KEELER
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Officials at Osan Air Base confirmed new coronavirus cases Wednesday, saying teams were cleaning the affected facilities and urging people who had visited them to self-quarantine and contact their leadership.

The 51st Fighter Wing would not provide the number of people infected or give more details, citing operational security, but it said the health alert level for the base was not being raised from HPCON Bravo and the facilities would resume normal operating hours Thursday.

The announcement came hours after U.S. Forces Korea, which oversees all forces on the divided peninsula, reported that an American service member had tested positive for the virus after arriving on a commercial flight at Incheon International Airport on Sunday and being based to a quarantine barracks at Camp

Humphreys.

"Since testing positive, he has been moved to Camp Humphreys isolation barracks designated for confirmed COVID-19 cases," according to the press release. COVID-19 is the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus. Military health professionals also thoroughly cleaned the bus and quarantine room he had occupied, it said.

That raised to 40 the number of confirmed cases affiliated with USFK since the virus began spreading rapidly in South Korea in late February, including 13 active-duty troops who recently arrived for new assignments. It was unclear how the Osan Air Base cases would ultimately affect that number.

The air base is home to the terminal that receives the government-chartered Patriot Express, which carries troops and their loved ones to and from new assignments.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

States rush to get hospital beds, not barstools

As coronavirus cases surge, many reverse course on reopening beaches, restaurants

By TAMARA LUSH
AND JOHN SEEWER
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Florida and other states across the Sunbelt are thinning out the deck chairs, turning over the barstools and rushing to line up more hospital beds as they head into the height of the summer season amid a startling surge in confirmed cases of the coronavirus.

With newly reported infections running about 40,000 a day in the U.S., Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, warned on Tuesday that the number could rocket to 100,000 if Americans don't start following public health recommendations.

Over the past few days, states such as Florida, Arizona, Texas and California have reversed course, closing or otherwise clamping down on bars, shutting beaches, rolling back restaurant capacity, putting limits on crowds at pools, or taking other steps to curb a scourge that may be thriving because of such factors as air conditioning and resistance to wearing masks.

"Any time you have these reopenings, you're depending on people to do the right things, to follow the rules. I think that's where the weak spots come in," said Dr. Cindy Prins, a University of Florida epidemiologist. She warned that things are likely to get worse before they get better.

Hospitals in the new hot spots are already stretched nearly to the limit and are scrambling to add intensive care unit beds for



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

People wear masks as they walk by a statue of Elvis Presley on Tuesday in Nashville, Tenn. The Nashville Health Department has put in place a mask mandate to help battle the spread of the coronavirus. Some states are limiting restaurant and beach capacities due to a surge in cases across the U.S.

an expected surge in COVID-19 cases in the coming weeks.

Newly confirmed cases in Florida have spiked over the past week, especially in younger people, who may be more likely to survive the virus but can spread it to the Sunshine State's many vulnerable older residents.

The state reported more than 6,000 new confirmed cases Tuesday. More than 8,000 were recorded on each of three days last week. Deaths have climbed past 3,500. Floridians ages 15 to 34 now make up 31% of all cases, up from 25% in early June. Last week, more than 8,000 new confirmed cases were reported in

that age group, compared with about 2,000 among people 55 to 64 years old.

Hospital ICUs are starting to fill up in South Florida, with a steadily increasing number of patients requiring ventilators. Miami's Baptist Hospital had only six of its 82 ICU beds available, officials said.

In hard-hit Arizona, hospitals are looking for ways to cram more beds into their facilities and hiring out-of-state nurses. State officials have authorized "crisis standards of care" telling hospitals which patients should get a ventilator or other scarce resources if there is a shortage.

Dignity Health, which operates several hospitals in the Phoenix area, is converting more areas to treat COVID-19 patients and preparing to put multiple patients in private rooms, spokeswoman Carmelle Malkovich said. It's bringing nurses from underutilized hospitals in its system to Arizona, and hiring traveling nurses and respiratory therapists throughout July.

Republican Gov. Doug Ducey shut down bars, movie theaters and gyms and banned groups larger than 10 at swimming pools.

Air conditioning could be a factor in hot-weather states where

new cases have been spiking, because it recirculates air instead of bringing it in fresh from outside, said Dr. Kristin Englund, an infectious-disease physician at Cleveland Clinic.

"I definitely think the air conditioning and the oppressive heat in the South is going to play a role in this," she said.

The coronavirus has been blamed for over a half-million deaths worldwide, including about 130,000 in the U.S., where the number of new cases per day has soared over the past month, primarily in the South and West.

"I would not be surprised if we go up to 100,000 a day if this does not turn around, and so I am very concerned," Fauci said on Capitol Hill.

The new round of shutdowns across the country is likely to cause another spike in layoffs.

Elsewhere, the European Union will reopen Wednesday to visitors from 14 countries — but not the U.S., which has barred most Europeans. The EU also kept its ban in place for visitors from China and from countries such as Russia, Brazil and India where infections are running high.

Americans make up a big share of Europe's tourism industry, and summer is a key period. More than 15 million Americans travel to Europe each year, while some 10 million Europeans head across the Atlantic.

Across the English Channel, things are also eased in reverse in places.

Britain reimposed a lockdown in Leicester, a city of 330,000 that officials said accounted for 10% of all new coronavirus cases in the nation last week. Stores closed their doors, and schools prepared to send children home.

Health experts slam US hoarding of licensed virus drug

By AMARIA CHENG
Associated Press

LONDON — Health experts Wednesday slammed the U.S. decision to hog nearly the entire global supply of remdesivir, the only drug licensed so far to treat COVID-19, warning that type of selfish behavior sets a dangerous precedent for attempts to share scarce treatments amid the pandemic.

The U.S. government announced Tuesday that President Donald Trump had struck "a amazing deal" to buy the drug for Americans, made by Gilead Sciences. The Department of Health and Human Services said Trump has secured 500,000 treatments of the drug through September, representing 100% of Gilead's July production capacity and 90% of its capacity in August and September.

"The Trump administration is doing everything in our power to learn more about lifesaving therapeutics for COVID-19 and secure access to these options for all American people," HHS said in a statement.

Early trials testing remdesivir in pa-

'It so clearly signals an unwillingness to cooperate with other countries.'

Ohid Yaqub
University of Sussex

tients hospitalized with COVID-19 found that those who received the drug recovered quicker than those who didn't. It is the only drug licensed by both the U.S. and the European Union as a treatment for those with severe illness due to coronavirus.

Ohid Yaqub, a senior lecturer at the University of Sussex called the move "disappointing news."

"It so clearly signals an unwillingness to cooperate with other countries and the chilling effect this has on international agreements about intellectual property rights," Yaqub said in a statement.

Dr. Peter Horby, who is running a large

clinical trial testing several treatments for COVID-19, told the BBC that "a stronger framework" was needed to ensure fair prices and access to key medicines for people and nations around the world. He said that as an American company, Gilead was likely under "certain political pressures locally."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman, James Slack, declined to criticize the United States for the move but said the U.K. had a stockpile of remdesivir.

"The U.K. has been using remdesivir for some time, first in trials and now in the "Early Access to Medicines Scheme," he said.

He added that Britain had a "sufficient stock" of remdesivir for patients who need it but did not specify how much that was.

Thomas Senderovitz, head of the Danish Medicines Agency, told Danish broadcaster DR that the move could endanger Europeans and others down the road.

"I have never seen anything like that. That a company chooses to sell their stock to only one country. It's very strange and quite inappropriate," he said. "Right now

we have enough to make it through the summer if the intake of patients is as it is now. If a second wave comes, we may be challenged."

In earlier stages of the pandemic, the U.S. refused to export pre-ordered masks to other countries, including ally Canada, and reportedly paid off airplanes delivering ventilators that were originally destined for other countries.

To date, COVID-19 has sickened more than 10.5 million people worldwide, killing some 512,000, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Experts say the true toll of the pandemic is much higher due to limited testing and other issues.

The United States has the worst outbreak in the world, with 2.6 million reported infected and 127,000 confirmed virus-related deaths, according to Johns Hopkins.

Top U.S. infectious diseases expert Dr. Anthony Fauci told senators on Tuesday that the U.S. outbreak is "going in the wrong direction" and he feared the country could see 100,000 new infections a day if things did not improve. The U.S. is currently seeing about 40,000 new cases a day.

NATION



TED S. WARREN/AP

A protester moves a recycling container next to a sign listing demands after Seattle Department of Transportation workers removed concrete barricades Tuesday at the CHOP (Capitol Hill Occupied Protest) zone in Seattle. Police cleared the area Wednesday.

Seattle police clear 'occupied' area after order from mayor

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Seattle police turned out in force early Wednesday at the city's "occupied" protest zone, tore down demonstrators' encampments and used bicycles to herd the protesters after the mayor ordered the area cleared following two fatal shootings in less than two weeks.

Television images showed police, many in riot gear, confronting dozens of protesters at the "Capitol Hill Occupied Protest" zone that was set up near downtown following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Wearing helmets and wielding batons and rifles, officers converged on the area at dawn. Of-

ficers stood shoulder-to-shoulder on several streets while others created a makeshift fence with their bicycles, using it to push protesters back away from the center of the zone.

As residents of the neighborhood near the city's downtown watched from balconies, police cleared out the protesters' tents from a park within the zone and made sure no one was left in the park's bathrooms.

Police Chief Carmen Best said there were at least 23 arrests.

"Our job is to support peaceful demonstration but what has happened on these streets over the last two weeks is lawless and it's brutal and bottom line it is simply unacceptable," Best told

reporters.

Police also tore down fences that protesters had erected around their tents.

After police dispersed the protesters, heavy equipment was brought in to remove the concrete barriers that demonstrators had erected to block roads. Debris was carted away on flatbed trucks as officers strung yellow caution tape on trees, warning people not to reenter.

The protesters had occupied several blocks around a park for about two weeks and police abandoned a precinct station following standoffs and clashes with the protesters, who called for racial justice and an end to police brutality.

Mississippi drops last state flag with Confederate symbol

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS
Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — With a stroke of the governor's pen, Mississippi is retiring the last state flag in the United States with the Confederate battle emblem — a symbol that's widely condemned as racist.

Republican Gov. Tate Reeves signed the historic bill Tuesday at the Governor's Mansion, immediately removing official status for the 126-year-old banner that has been a source of division for generations.

"This is not a political moment to me but a solemn occasion to lead our Mississippi family to come together to be reconciled and to move on," Reeves said on live TV just before the signing. "We are a resilient people defined by our hospitality. We are a people of great faith. Now, more than ever, we must lean on that faith, unite our divisions behind us and unite for a greater good."

Mississippi has faced increasing pressure to change its flag since protests against racial injustice have focused attention on Confederate symbols in recent weeks.

A broad coalition of legislators on Sunday passed the landmark legislation to change the flag, capping a weekend of emotional debate and decades of effort by Black lawmakers and others who

see the rebel emblem as a symbol of hatred.

Among the small group of dignitaries witnessing the bill signing were Reuben Anderson, who was the first African American justice on the Mississippi Supreme Court, serving from 1985 to 1991, Willie Simmons, a current state Transportation Commissioner who is the first African American elected to that job, and Reena Evers-Everette, daughter of civil rights icons Medgar and Myrlie Evers.

"That Confederate symbol is not who Mississippi is now. It's not what it was in 1894, either, inclusive of all Mississippians," Evers-Everette said after the ceremony. "But now we're going to a place of total inclusion and unity with our hearts along with our thoughts and in our actions."

Reeves used several pens to sign the bill. As he completed the process, a cheer could be heard from people outside the Governor's Mansion who were watching the livestream broadcast on their phones. Reeves handed the pens to lawmakers and others who had worked on the issue.

Critics have said for generations that it's wrong for a state where 38% of the people are Black to have a flag marked by the Confederacy, particularly since the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups have used the symbol to promote racist agendas.

Protester says Iowa governor's SUV hit him intentionally

Associated Press

ACKLEY, Iowa — An SUV carrying Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds hit a Black Lives Matter protester who was trying to block the vehicle Tuesday as she was leaving an event in northern Iowa, but the Iowa State Patrol blamed the protester and said there was little contact.

The state patrol confirmed the SUV hit the protester, who was among about two dozen Black Lives Matter activists who had traveled 90 miles from Des Moines to Ackley. Members of

the group weren't allowed into the event at Family Traditions Meat, a small processor, so they gathered at the end of a driveway and tried to block the governor's SUV.

Jaylen Cavil, a Black Lives Matter organizer, told the Des Moines Register that he stood in the driveway in the hopes that Reynolds would roll down a window and talk with protesters.

"I was standing right in front of the car and I just stood there. I was like, 'I'm going to stand here. Surely the driver of the governor is not going to hit me with her car."

This is the governor, my governor, who's supposed to be representing me. I'm sure that her car is not going to intentionally hit me.' I was wrong," he said.

Cavil said the impact spun him around and lifted him onto the SUV's hood, but he wasn't hurt.

"I 100% think they intentionally hit me," he said. "There's no way that this driver could not see me right in front of his car."

Afterward, Cavil said an Iowa State Patrol trooper began yelling at him and called him an idiot.

Although patrol spokesman Sgt. Alex Dinkla acknowledged

what happened, he said in a statement that there was little contact between the protester and the SUV, which was driven by a state trooper. Dinkla also blamed the protester for approaching the SUV and causing his contact with the vehicle.

"As the vehicle began to turn away from the protester and onto the roadway, the demonstrator intentionally stepped in front of the slowly moving vehicle," Dinkla said. "The demonstrator had little to no physical reaction to any contact he created, and the vehicle then entered the roadway."

Dinkla said the protester didn't appear to be hurt and didn't request medical attention. Protesters then shouted at authorities and blocked state patrol troopers from leaving the area, Dinkla said.

Black Lives Matter activists have been protesting outside Reynolds' office and attending events in hopes of pressuring her to quickly sign an executive order ending Iowa's status as the only state that automatically revokes felons' voting rights. They must individually petition the governor to restore their rights.



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NATION

Gun-toting restaurateur upsets Colo. congressman

Associated Press

DENVER — A pistol-packing restaurant owner who has expressed support for a far-right conspiracy theory has upset five-term U.S. Rep. Scott Tipton in Colorado's primary elections.

Tipton became the fourth House member to lose renomination bids this year. Republican Reps. Steve King of Iowa and Denver Riggleman of Virginia, and Democrat Daniel Lipinski of Illinois, have already been ousted by challengers.

He lost Tuesday to Lauren Boebert, the owner of a gun-friendly restaurant in a western Colorado town called Rifle. Earlier this year, Boebert said in an interview that

she was "very familiar" with the QAnon conspiracy theory, but she stopped short of saying she was a follower.

"Everything that I've heard of Q, I hope that this is real because it only means that America is getting stronger and better, and people are returning to conservative values," she told interviewer Ann Vandersteel.

QAnon followers believe that Trump is fighting enemies in the "deep state" and a child sex trafficking ring run by satanic pedophiles and cannibals. The QAnon name comes from online clues purportedly posted by a high-ranking government official known as "Q."

Boebert won the primary for Colorado's 3rd Congressional District after a cam-



McKENZIE LANGE, THE GRAND JUNCTION DAILY SENTINEL/AP

Lauren Boebert defeated five-term Colorado Rep. Scott Tipton in the Republican primary.

paign in which she accused Tipton of not being sufficiently pro-Donald Trump even though the president had endorsed Tipton.

She will run in November's general election against Diane Mitsch Bush, a former state lawmaker who won the Democratic nomination Tuesday by defeating business- man James Iacino.

Former Marine wins Ky. primary, to face McConnell

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Former Marine pilot Amy McGrath overcame a bumper-than-expected Kentucky primary to win the Democratic U.S. Senate nomination Tuesday, fending off progressive Charles Booker to set up a bruising, big-spending showdown with Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Voting ended June 23, but it took a week until McGrath could be declared the winner due to the race's tight margins and a deluge of mail-in ballots. The outcome seemed a certainty early in the campaign but became tenuous as Booker's profile surged as the Black state lawmaker highlighted protests against the deaths of African Americans in encounters with police.

It was a narrow victory for McGrath. She outlasted Booker by 15,149 votes out of more than 544,000 votes cast. Several other candidates attracted tens of thousands of votes. McConnell, a key ally to President Donald Trump, already breezed to victory in the GOP primary in his bid for a seventh term.

Declaring victory, McGrath reached out to Booker's supporters to try to unite the party for the challenge ahead against McConnell, who has dominated Kentucky's political landscape for decades.

Hickenlooper wins Dem Senate primary in Colorado

Associated Press

DENVER — Former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper won the Democratic nomination Tuesday to face Republican Sen. Cory Gardner in November, overcoming a series of stumbles and beating back a challenge from his left.

Hickenlooper defeated former Colorado House Speaker Andrew Romanoff, a former moderate who turned himself into a populist, running against the moderate favorite of the Democratic establishment and promising a Green New Deal and single-payer health care.

But he could not overcome both Hickenlooper's immense financial edge — the former governor out-raised Romanoff by about 7-to-1 — and his deep name ID and reservoir of goodwill among voters stemming from two terms in the governor's mansion.

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Transportation

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Citizens hold suspected shoplifter at gunpoint

WA SPOKANE — Two people who pointed handguns at a suspected shoplifter in Washington state and threatened to shoot her have received some cautionary advice from police: Be reasonable.

A video posted on Facebook shows a woman being held at gunpoint in her car in Spokane by people who believed she stole from a store.

The Spokesman-Review reported that Annamarie L. Kirkpatrick, 36, was cited for shoplifting, a gross misdemeanor.

Video taken by bystanders shows a man and a woman drew their handguns and pointed them at the woman as she sat in her car.

Neither the man nor the woman with a gun have been charged with a crime, according to police.

Firm to offer balloon rides to edge of space

AK ANCHORAGE — A company wants to use an advanced balloon to fly customers from Earth's surface in Alaska to the highest reaches of the planet's atmosphere.

Florida-based startup firm Space Perspective plans to use the Pacific Spaceport Complex in Kodiak to serve as one of the launch sites for the vehicle, called the Spaceship Neptune, The Anchorage Daily News reported.

The balloon rides will be manned by a flight crew taking eight passengers in a pressurized capsule suspended beneath a hydrogen balloon the size of a football stadium.

Each passenger could pay an estimated \$125,000 for a six-hour journey.

Mark Lester, CEO of Alaska Aerospace Corp., said the high-altitude rides will be available from Kodiak in a few years and will support Alaska tourism.

Police: Suspect stole car, dragged officer

NC FAYETTEVILLE — A male suspect faced numerous charges after Fayetteville police said he stole a police vehicle, dragging an officer behind it, struck an EMS worker and then fled the scene.

The incident started when police officers were dispatched with the suspect for a medical call, police said in a news release. They encountered the suspect, who was "agitated" and uncooperative, police said.

The suspect got into the driver's seat of a police car and put the car into drive, dragging an officer. He then hit an EMS worker and a pursuit ensued, in which the suspect collided with several other vehicles, police said.

The chase ended when the suspect crashed into a ditch in a town about 15 miles away.

Residents return after fire in asphalt tank

NJ GLOUCESTER CITY — Firefighters were trying to determine what caused an as-



Sue Olschki/AP

Splashdown

Kiteboarder Daniel Nicholson splashes down near a windsurfer at Oklahoma City's Lake Hefner on a breezy Monday.

phalt tank fire early Tuesday that shook a neighborhood of homes and businesses and forced the evacuation of at least 30 families. Neighbors of Blueknight Energy Partners said they were awakened by a bang and their homes shook around 2:45 a.m. Emergency officials soon ordered their evacuation.

Firefighters used foam to control the flames and residents were allowed to return about four hours later.

No injuries were reported.

Woman gored multiple times by park bison

WY YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — A 72-year-old California woman was gored multiple times by a wild bison at Yellowstone National Park after repeatedly approaching the animal to take its photograph, park administrators said.

The woman was flown to an Idaho hospital for treatment of her injuries following the June 25 incident. She was not identified and her current condition is unknown.

The woman was at her campsite at the park's Bridge Bay Campground when she approached within 10 feet of the animal multiple times, park officials said.

Run-ins between visitors and bison, also known as buffalo, occur periodically at Yellowstone. The animals are normally placid but can respond aggressively and charge when approached.

THE CENSUS

4K

The approximate weight, in pounds of illegal fireworks seized in Glendale, Ariz. A tip from a resident alerted the Glendale Fire Marshal's Office to what was believed to be an illegal sales operation at a residence. Fire inspectors arrived and found a large stash of fireworks and explosive materials, which are prohibited from use within the city limits. Authorities said charges are pending.

Visitors are required to stay at least 25 yards away from large animals, including bison, elk, bighorn sheep, deer, moose and coyotes, and at least 100 yards away from bears and wolves.

Border agents find large pot cache in truck

NY BUFFALO — Border agents found nearly 9,500 pounds of marijuana hidden in a commercial truck entering Buffalo from Canada in the biggest drug seizure on record at the northern border, authorities said.

The driver, Prabhat Nagra, faces federal charges after an X-ray of his trailer at the Peace Bridge on June 25 revealed irregularities that led Customs and Border Protection officers to examine its contents. They found wooden shipping containers holding 8,320 vacuum-sealed packages of marijuana valued at \$20 million.

It was the third big marijuana seizure at the Peace Bridge in June.

On June 5, more than \$2 million worth of marijuana was seized after it came across the Peace

Bridge in a truck carrying coffee makers.

On June 13, more than 3,300 pounds of marijuana worth more than \$5 million was found hidden in a truckload of peat moss from Canada.

Stiffer sentences sought in rare book thefts

PA PITTSBURGH — Prosecutors asked a judge to stiffen the home confinement and probation sentences imposed on a former librarian and a bookseller who pleaded guilty in the theft of rare books from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh in a years-long scheme.

Common Pleas Judge Alexander Bickett sentenced John Schulman, 56, to four years of home confinement and Gregory Priore, 64, to three years of home confinement. Both were ordered to spend a dozen years on probation after completing their sentences.

Priore, former manager of the rare books room at the library, pleaded guilty in January to theft and receiving stolen property. Schulman, the owner of Caliban

Book Shop, pleaded guilty to theft by deception, receiving stolen property and forgery. The judge told the two men that if not for the pandemic, their sentences would have been stiffer.

Authorities said Priore stole prints, maps and rare books and handed them off to Schulman to resell them. Prosecutors said several hundred rare items worth more than \$8 million were taken in a scheme investigators believed dated back to the 1990s.

Confederate cannons moved to Fort Fisher

NC WILMINGTON — Two Civil War cannons that were at a Confederate monument in Raleigh are now at Fort Fisher.

The Wilmington Star News reported that the naval cannons arrived after they were removed with the 1895 monument on the orders of Gov. Roy Cooper after they were vandalized.

Fort Fisher was a Confederate fort during the Civil War. It is having a \$23 million renovation of its visitors center and grounds.

Michele Walker, a spokeswoman for the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, said the cannons will remain on display at Fort Fisher, because they are from the same era as those already on display at the historic site.

From wire reports

FACES



CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP

Chloe Bailey, left, and Halle Bailey were involved in every aspect of producing their new album, "Ungodly Hour," which was released June 12.

Grown up, and ready to turn up

Sister duo Chloe x Halle transition into adulthood on sophomore album, 'Ungodly Hour'

BY MESFIN FEKADU
Associated Press

After the sister duo Chloe x Halle spent a year working on their sophomore album — which they co-wrote, co-produced and co-engineered — they sent it off to get thoughts from their mentor, Queen Beyoncé.

Her royal response: It's flawless. "When we sent her the album, she said that she loved it and didn't have any notes," Chloe Bailey recalled. "(We) were like, 'Oh wow!' She must really like it because she always sends notes, which we appreciate and add in most of the time. I'm really proud of this album and if she loves it, I hope everyone else loves it, too."

"Ungodly Hour," released June 12 by Beyoncé's Parkwood Entertainment and Columbia Records, finds the singing siblings, who debuted on the music scene as teenagers, transitioning into adulthood.

The co-stars of the hit TV series "grown-ish" are all grown up on the project, as the singers trade verses on the songs — and do that epic sisterly harmonization thing — while singing about female independence, self-worth and relationship woes, includ-

ing dusty boys and players. They even occasionally drop the F-bomb.

"We're growing as young women. We're finding ourselves through experiences — whether it's through love, through heart-break, getting over any insecurities we may have — we just wanted to put that into the music," said Chloe Bailey, who turned 22 on Wednesday.

"The root of everything is definitely the inspiration of our lives," added Halle Bailey, 20.

The album bumps with mid-tempo and groovy R&B flavor throughout, as the musicians sing about going out and kiki-ing with the girls on "Do It" to demanding their potential suitors love themselves first before pursuing them on the title track.

The album has already marked new heights for the group: First single "Do It," which had a viral moment on TikTok because of the song's popular dance, reached No. 9 on Billboard's R&B songs chart, marking the first time a Chloe x Halle track has appeared on any Billboard chart.

Their debut, 2018's "The Kids Are Alright," peaked at No. 139 on Billboard's Top 200 albums chart, but they earned nominations at the Grammys, MTV Video Music

Awards, BET Awards, the Soul Train Music Awards and NAACP Image Awards.

"The Kids Are Alright," I'm really happy with what it did for us. It wasn't like a big chart-topper or anything like that," Chloe Bailey said. "As long as we got our message across and poured our hearts and love through that, that's all we needed to do to feel accomplished."

"Ungodly Hour" features popular producers and songwriters like Sounwave, Disclosure, Scott Storch, Victoria Monet, Boi-1da and Mike WILL Made-It, but the girls are the creative center of the album. Chloe Bailey has production credits on 10 of the 13 songs, three of which she produced alone. She also recorded the duo's vocals for 12 tracks. Halle Bailey worked as an assistant engineer on all the songs, and co-produced two of them. And the girls co-wrote every track on the album.

"Our dad has always told us to be independent and if we don't know something to figure it out. That's why we're so hands on in everything that we do," Chloe Bailey said. "It wouldn't feel right if we weren't so hands-on with the process. If it's our music and our art, we want to articulate in a way that is us fully."



Awkwafina



Erivo



Longoria



Washington



Zendaya

Awkwafina, Zendaya are among 819 invited to join film academy

BY LINDSEY BAHK
Associated Press

Cynthia Erivo, John David Washington, Eva Longoria, Zendaya and Awkwafina are among the 819 people who have been invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The organization that puts on the Oscars announced the new invitees Tuesday. If they accept, which most do, those in the new class will have voting privileges at this year's Oscars.

The massive 2020 list includes a diverse swath of people from all sectors of the industry, from acting to publicity to costume design. Invited actors include Ana de Armas ("Knives Out"), Brian Tyree Henry ("If Beale Street Could Talk"), Florence Pugh ("Little Women"), Lakeith Stanfield ("Sorry to Bother You"), Beanie Feldstein ("Booksmart") and Constance Wu ("Crazy Rich Asians"). Directors like Lulu Wang ("The Farewell"), Ari Aster ("Midsommar"), Terence Davies ("The House of Mirth") and Matthew Vaughn ("Layer Cake") are also on the list.

A handful of actors from this year's best picture winner "Parasite," including Jang Hye-jin, Jo Yeo-jeong, Park So-dam and Lee Jung-eun, were also invited to join. The Academy said that 49% of the new invitees are international and represent some 68 countries.

Other notable invitees include TV mogul Ryan Murphy, who produced the

documentary "A Secret Love"; country singer Tim McGraw, who was in "The Blind Side"; and lyricist Bernie Taupin, who contributed to the Elton John biopic "Rocketman."

Academy president David Rubin said that the organization is "delighted to welcome these distinguished fellow travelers in the motion picture arts and sciences."

Diversifying its ranks continues to be a main focus for the film academy, which in 2016 committed to doubling its female and minority membership by 2020. It has since surpassed those goals and continues to infuse membership classes with both women and people from underrepresented communities. Women make up 45% of the 2020 class and people of color comprise 36% of the total of invitees this year. The academy has also announced a new five-year plan that includes implementing inclusion standards for nominees.

"We look forward to continuing to foster an Academy that reflects the world around us in our membership, our programs, our new Museum, and in our awards," said academy CEO Dawn Hudson in a written statement.

This will also be the first year that talent agent members will be able to vote on the awards.

The 93rd Academy Awards are set to take place on April 25, two months later than originally planned due to COVID-19's effects on the industry.

49%

Percentage of international invitees, according to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

45%

Women invited to join the academy.

36%

People of color among the 819 invitees this year.

Stewart to write memoir

Associated Press

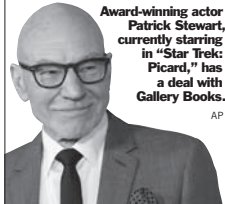
Nearing 90, Sir Patrick Stewart is finally ready for the project he once feared — his memoir.

The award-winning actor best known as Capt. Jean-Luc Picard of "Star Trek: The Next Generation" has a deal with Gallery Books for a "revealing and heart-warming look" into his life and times, the publisher announced Tuesday. A title and release date will be determined later.

"The idea of writing a memoir based on my life and career has been in my mind for several years, but always the demands of work have pushed it into the background. Today there are no demands, nor is there a prediction when there might be," Stewart, who turns 80 on July 13, said in a statement.

Stewart, currently starring in "Star Trek: Picard" on CBS All Access, will write about everything from Star Trek to his award-winning stage performances to his voice work on "American Dad." He had expressed concern in the past about bringing back memories of his abusive father, but he will "reflect on his childhood in Yorkshire, England, marked by

Award-winning actor Patrick Stewart, currently starring in "Star Trek: Picard," has a deal with Gallery Books.



poverty and domestic violence, as well as his lifelong political advocacy and ongoing charity work," according to Gallery.

Kaepernick, DuVernay team up for series

Colin Kaepernick is teaming with Emmy-winning filmmaker Ava DuVernay on a Netflix series about the teenage roots of the former NFL player's activism.

"Colin in Black & White" will illuminate the high school experiences that shaped Kaepernick's advocacy, Netflix said Monday.

"Too often we see race and Black stories portrayed through a white lens," Kaepernick said in a statement. "We seek to give new perspective to the differing realities that Black people face."

Kaepernick, born to a white mother and Black father, was adopted in Wisconsin by a white couple who moved to California when he was a child. In 2016, the San Francisco 49ers quarterback began kneeling during the national anthem to protest police brutality and racial inequality, drawing support and criticism. Kaepernick became a free agent in 2017 but went unsigned.

Other news

Johnny Mandel, the Oscar- and Grammy-winning composer, arranger and musician who worked on albums by Frank Sinatra, Natalie Cole and many others, and whose songwriting credits included "The Shadow of Your Smile" and the theme from the film and TV show "M*A*S*H," died Monday of a cardiac ailment at his home in Ojai, Calif. He was 94.

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OPINION

Is Roberts trying to prevent court packing?

By HENRY OLSEN

The Washington Post

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts voted with the court's four progressive justices in three key cases over the past few weeks. He provided his own legal rationale in two of them, but his real motive might be to prevent Senate Democrats from packing the court after November's election.

You need to travel all the way back to 1937 to understand what Roberts might be thinking. Back then, Democratic President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had just had a historic landslide win in the 1936 election, defeating his Republican opponent, Alf Landon, by 24 points and a 523-to-8 margin in the Electoral College. Democrats gained seats in the House and Senate, preparing for a fourth straight election and held a 334-88 majority in the House and a 74-17 seat lead in the Senate. Two small pro-Roosevelt parties held another 13 seats in the House and three in the Senate. The people had spoken, and they wanted more of FDR's New Deal.

Roosevelt was being stymied, however, by a Supreme Court dominated by five aging conservative justices. Those justices had struck down his National Recovery Administration and parts of his Agricultural Adjustment Act, two key cogs in his New Deal — an unconstitutional. Buoyed by his overwhelming popular mandate, Roosevelt proposed a bill allowing a president to appoint a new Supreme Court justice for every sitting justice who was both older than 70 years and 6 months old and had served for 10 years. That would have allowed him to add as many as six new justices in 1937, providing a clear supermajority to back New Deal measures.

One justice, Owen Roberts, saw the writing on the wall. He had opposed the NRA

and AAA but switched to back a minimum wage law in a decision released only three weeks after Roosevelt announced his court-packing plan to the public. This unexpected reversal became known in legal lore as "the switch in time that saved nine," a prudent move that arguably sapped public enthusiasm for Roosevelt's gambit. Justice Willis Van Devanter, another aged New Deal opponent, retired a few months later, giving Roosevelt his first court appointment. Both decisions helped prevent the court-packing scheme from becoming law, and this continued the tradition of keeping the number of justices at nine.

Democratic furor over Justice Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation has helped reignite the interest in packing the court. Liberals started to call for adding justices to the court almost as soon as Kavanaugh took his seat. By March 2019, leading Democrats were endorsing the scheme. When the presumptive Democratic nominee, Joe Biden, has said he opposes the idea, Biden has been known to change his stances before. With polls increasingly showing Democrats likely to regain the White House and take back control of the Senate, Roberts would have to be living in a cave not to see that court packing could happen soon.

Hence, perhaps, his recent votes. He joined the majority in the case extending anti-discrimination protections to the LGBT community through the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He also cast the deciding votes in the case that prevented President Donald Trump from repealing the Obama-era Defense and Production of Childbirth Arrivals program and in Monday's case overturning a Louisiana law requiring abortion providers to have admitting privileges at a hospital. His vote in the latter case came even though he had voted against overturning

a similar law just a few years earlier. His concurring decision in this case argued that the previous case provided binding precedent even though he still thought it was wrongly decided. This cannot be done well for conservative hopes that Roberts would overturn the nearly 50-year-old precedent in *Roe v. Wade*.

In making these decisions, the chief justice, like the previous Justice Roberts more than 70 years ago, switched on key cases important to the progressive social activists who sparked the modern court-packing movement. By switching before the election, Roberts could be thinking that he has done so "in time to save nine" — removing the pretext for packing the court.

We'll see. The court is much more of a political issue today than it was in the 1930s. Progressives could be wary of giving Roberts a chance to switch back once the political coast is clear. There's also the lingering anger among liberals over Republican refusal to even hold a hearing on President Trump's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland in 2016 to replace the late conservative Justice Antonin Scalia. Should Democrats retake the Senate in the fall, they could decide to use their new majority to add progressives to the court rather than risk that happening again should the GOP retake the Senate after the 2022 midterms.

Roberts might think his middle-of-the-road position will preserve the court's independence. But the old saying of Texas progressive politician Jim Hightower may yet prove true: "There's nothing in the middle of the road except yellow stripes and dead armadillos."

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Real estate mogul not built to handle coronavirus

By DAVID VON DREHLE

The Washington Post

Real estate developers begin as storytellers. They drive a few stakes into an empty expanse and begin spinning a tale of winding streets and welcoming houses, of shops and schools and playgrounds, a community center, a swimming pool, a golf course. Or maybe instead of a subdivision, they tell the story of a skyscraper, an apartment complex, a retirement village.

They need people to believe them. Bankers to loan the money. Governments to grant the permits and abate the taxes. Tenants to sign the leases. Buyers to take out the mortgages. As if by alchemy, the story comes true because people think it will come true. Enough belief makes the whole thing fly.

Looking through the lens of President Donald Trump's real estate background is the only way I can begin to understand his response to the coronavirus, which has otherwise been baffling as it has been fearless. More than three months after his belated declaration of a national emergency, as the country continues to set records for the number of new cases diagnosed each day, Trump seldom speaks of the pandemic, except to disparage the disease and talk down the consequences.

More than half the population have died around the world, about a quarter of them in the United States. Originally transported from China by unwitting international air travelers, the virus has now spread beyond developed nations to reach even the poorest corners of the planet. Thus, the toll is sure to grow even greater. To which Trump said, "I don't kid." Taking him at

foreseen. Every public health official and epidemiologist I've read or heard has been telling us exactly what would happen if we didn't take the pandemic in the past tense. And yet that's the way the president has treated it: Let's open up! Back to the bars and restaurants! Jam the arenas! And forget about those masks!

He wanted us to believe, as if belief would make it so. The danger would be over when we all agreed to stop thinking about it. If he drove his fingers in the ground and said a post-pandemic future, we could all live and work there happily ever after. Alas, COVID-19 is an independent fact, impervious to even the most desperate speli.

I believe Trump thought the virus would take the summer off, as many flu bugs and coronaviruses do, and remain quiescent until late fall or winter — after the election. Perhaps there would be a vaccine by the time it returned. He wasn't alone in hoping for a seasonal reprieve. Even among experts, there was widespread optimism that we'd get a break over the summer. But here we are at the beginning of July, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is telling us "the pandemic is actually speeding up."

Hospitals are at or near capacity in hot spots from one end of the country to the other, from California to Florida and points along the way, and steel skeletons of new loosed are being tightened again. It feels like putting toothpaste back into the tube.

We had a glimpse into the real estate mindset when Trump disclosed at his Tulsa, Okla., rally: "I said to my people, 'Slow the testing down, please.'" His people scrambled to control the damage, assuring us that the testing was going to which Trump said, "I don't kid." Taking him at

his word, then, we're left to conclude that he views the virus as a contingency: We only see it because we are looking for it; conversely, if we just stopped looking, it would vanish.

I had COVID-19 back when tests were extremely rare. Though I showed multiple symptoms, the doctor sent me home without testing me, because they were needed for health care workers. Only recently did I get screened for antibodies. (Positive!) And I can tell you: There's nothing to sanitize about it. Tests do not cause COVID-19. True, many people are lucky enough to experience no symptoms of infection. But roughly 1,000 Americans per day, on average, have been dying of the disease over the past four months. Others have recovered, but with lasting damage. Still others have been very sick.

We can't afford any more enchanted thinking. In just a few months it will be flu season again, and unless we take effective steps to minimize cases of both the new virus and bad old influenza, hospitals across the country will be overwhelmed. Masses in public social distancing, sanitary hands — that's a start. These measures are useful in fighting all respiratory viruses. We also need (yes) more testing, contact tracing and effective quarantines. We need clear, effective communication from knowledgeable authorities — including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — to increase the number of Americans getting the annual flu vaccine.

The surge of new cases is calling us back to reality. We can do this — once we stop building castles in the air.

David Von Drehle is a Washington Post columnist. He is the author of "Rise to Greatness: Abraham Lincoln and America's Most Perilous Year."

OPINION

Japan crushed COVID-19 by masking. US could too.

By TRUDY RUBIN

The Philadelphia Inquirer

As coronavirus cases soar nationwide in many U.S. states, there is one thing every American could do that would make a difference.

Wear a mask.

President Donald Trump's miserable mockery of masks has morphed them into a partisan political symbol in this country. But in most democracies that have had the greatest success in fighting COVID-19, including South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan, mask-wearing is common practice.

The Japan example is of special interest to Americans, because its government, like ours, badly fumbled the initial handling of the virus. Yet it has suffered less than 1,000 virus deaths in a country of 126 million people. One key thing Japan did right was near-universal masking.

And the history of Japan's masking habits holds surprising lessons for Americans — while offering hope they could be duplicated in the U.S.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was slow and erratic in responding to COVID-19. He instituted no mandatory lockdowns on the public. His distribution of masks to each household was botched, while the government's distribution of funds to the public got mired in red tape.

Yet masking became almost universal, and though there is no proof it was a magic bullet, Japan's virus success indicates it had a serious impact. The country has experienced only 768 deaths per million, compared with 385 per million for the United States.

Of course, many ascribe this success to Japanese culture, and a common mask-wearing tradition in East Asia. "In Japan, there is a culture of concern for other people, and very strong behavioral norms," I was told by Linda Chasin, associate professor of Japanese studies at the University of Pennsylvania. "If the government says 'wear a mask,' they will." As a model to their country, Japan's emperor and em-

press have masked in public.

Other social factors also contribute. Japanese "don't do handshaking and kisses on the cheeks and speak more softly, and mask-wearing is common to protect against cedar pollen in the spring and during flu season," notes Jeffrey Kingston, director of Asian studies at Temple University's Japan Campus in Tokyo.

Yet, Kingston cautioned me that the history of Japan's mask-wearing could not be attributed solely to local practices. "Culture becomes the utility infielder of explanations (for mask-wearing)," he said. "But if this is so, how come Americans had a mask-wearing culture when Japan didn't?"

Indeed, according to a fascinating blog post by Harvard University historian Andrew Gordon, "the modern medical origins of masks worn for health purposes are Western." They were developed in the mid-1800s in the United States and Europe to protect miners against coal dust but adapted in Asia in the early 20th century to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. During the post-World War I "Spanish flu" epidemic, Japan encouraged mask-wearing, including in its colonies of South Korea and Taiwan.

But — and here is Gordon's key point — there was a "massive American commitment to mask wearing as a strategy" to protect the military and the general public in that same post-WWI era.

Adds Kingston, "More American soldiers died of Spanish flu than died from World War I fighting. Such a catastrophe shocked people. Americans used to be very confident with masking."

That confidence continued, apparently, until the 1930s, when masking was even shown in U.S. movies and used as a commonsense response to flu. But over the following decades, writes Gordon, "Two processes unfolded in parallel, inverse fashion: a deepened commitment to masks for protecting health in East Asia and the disappearance of the commitment in at least one nation."

Of course, that nation is the United States



EUGENE HOSHINO/AP

A woman wearing a protective face mask to help curb the spread of the coronavirus walks under traditional wind chimes in Tokyo on Wednesday.

in the era of Trump.

So it is easy to assume that, as Trump supporters and many younger Americans rebuff masks, this country could never resume a mask culture. Vice President Mike Pence, who heads Trump's coronavirus task force, almost never masks. [He recommended this week that Americans wear them when they are unable to maintain social distance.] And when Trump himself makes fun of Joe Biden for masking and mocks the practice in interviews and rallies, it's hard to see masking becoming widespread. The White House sloughs off the masking issue to local officials, who aren't well-positioned to enforce it.

Of course, Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx are begging people to mask, and some GOP governors are getting desperate enough to demand it. But national

leadership is absent, it becomes too easy to assume that an American culture of selfishness trumps sanity, led by the ego-in-chief in the White House.

And yet, surprisingly, recent polls show that most Americans support masking. About seven in 10 Americans say people who go to public places where they may be near others should wear masks most of the time or always, according to a mid-June Pew poll. And a mid-June Fox News poll found that 80% of Americans have a favorable view of mask-wearers.

So the Japan example is indeed relevant. Americans appear ready to resume the mask-wearing culture they adopted a little over a century ago.

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Taliban bounties would be a new low even for Putin

By JAMES STAVRIDIS

Bloomberg Opinion

As Americans consider news reports that Russia offered Taliban fighters bounties to kill U.S. service members, it's worth recalling the tortured history the two nations have in Afghanistan.

Going back to the days of the Afghan mujahideen and "Charlie Wilson's War," Washington provided weapons — notably, surface-to-air missiles — and training to Soviet adversaries in the 1980s. When I visited Moscow as the NATO commander of the Afghan mission almost 30 years later, I met with the man who had been the last Soviet general in Afghanistan (he had retired and gone into politics). He said to me that we Americans had "Russian blood on your hands."

But that was very different from allegedly providing cash payments to Taliban fighters for killing individual American soldiers, especially as peace talks are unfolding. Providing cash and training to allies and occasionally to surrogates is common international behavior — the U.S. does so for North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies and many other entities. But offering "bounties" for killing individual soldiers is shocking. It is especially dangerous when directed from an intelligence service of a nuclear-armed nation to the armed forces

of a strategic opponent.

Whether or not President Donald Trump was formally "briefed" on these allegations is an open question (he denies it). But the charges are so explosive that the real question is simple: If he wasn't briefed, why not?

If I had caught a whiff of Russian bounties being placed on the 150,000 troops that were under my strategic command in Afghanistan, I would have instantly called my direct superior, the secretary of defense. And I'm reasonably sure he would have immediately called the White House and set up a meeting of the National Security Council.

Certainly Congress will dive into this, and it should. If the bulk of the intelligence is accurate — and it certainly sounds plausible given what we know about the GRU, Russia's shadow intelligence service — there needs to be a forceful response. We'll know more in a few days and weeks, but the U.S. should already be considering what the response might be. The U.S. should already be fully and thoroughly assess all the extant intelligence and — at an appropriate level of classification that protects sources and methods — reveal publicly what Russia has done. Washington has already shared much of this with the U.K., according to press reports. Other allies who are at long last taking means in Afghanistan, mostly NATO nations, need

to see this as well, to ensure they can maintain suitable force protection.

The U.S. also must redouble intelligence collection in Afghanistan to fully understand the double game the Russians are playing, and what other ways they are seeking to undermine the nascent peace process. There needs to be a serious assessment of the degree to which the GRU has penetrated the Taliban broadly. If bounties were offered, was this low-level activity by overactive intelligence officers, or part of a broad strategic effort by Russia to undermine the peace talks?

If the latter, what can our Afghan partners in the government of President Ashraf Ghani tell us about what is happening? What are the Russians' objectives beyond killing American soldiers and embarrassing the U.S. in the country they dominated for a decade before being ignominiously driven out?

If the bounty reports are proved accurate, the Trump administration should strongly consider expelling the Russian ambassador to the U.S. and his entire intelligence team, along with consul generals. This would likely set off diplomatic retaliation by Russia, but that is a price we should be willing to pay. Similarly, no senior U.S. diplomats or military officers should meet with their Russian counterparts, including Trump envoys or talking with President Vladimir Putin or Secretary of State Mike

Pompeo with Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov.

In terms of military actions, the U.S. should reverse the recently announced removal of 10,000 troops from Germany. This is not the time to be showing a lack of resolve in our forward presence. It is also a good time to increase U.S. support to frontline allies dealing with Russia such as the Baltic states and Poland.

Finally, the U.S. should look at additional economic sanctions on Moscow, and certainly stop discussions of lifting current sanctions for its illegal invasion and occupation of Ukraine. It may be time to look at sanctions on individuals at the very senior levels of the Russian government, including Putin himself. It seems highly unlikely he would have been unaware of these bounties, particularly given his background as a KGB spymaster.

In a season of outrageous and unpredictable events, this stands out. If true, it shows such a blatant and reckless disregard for the norms of international behavior, even in a combat zone, that it puts the U.S. and Russia squarely on a geopolitical collision course.

Bloomberg Opinion columnist James Stavridis is a retired U.S. Navy admiral and former supreme allied commander of NATO, and dean emeritus of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

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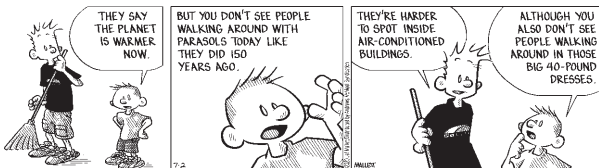
July 5th at 4 a.m. JST/KST

AFN|prime Atlantic

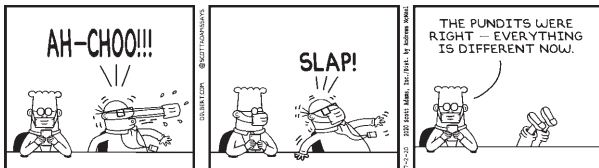
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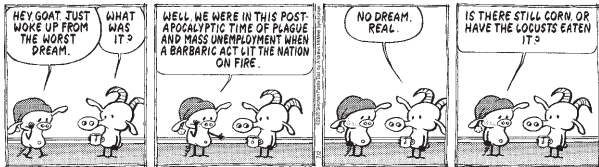
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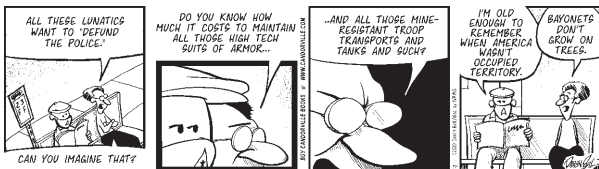
Pearls Before Swine



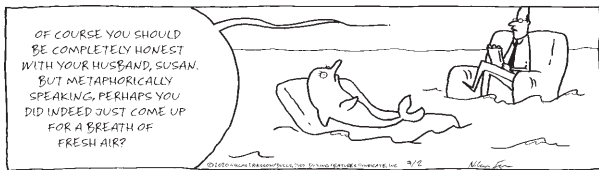
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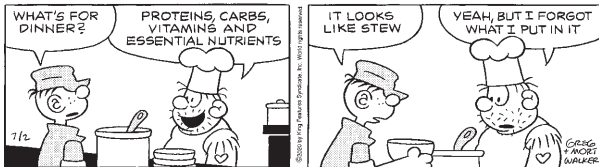
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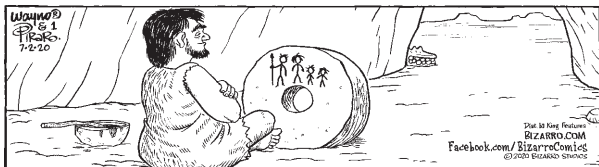
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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56					57				58			

ACROSS

- 1 Hoedown site
- 5 Young seal
- 8 Wild guess
- 12 Bassoon's kin
- 13 Epoch
- 14 Chorus syllables
- 15 Norwegian saint
- 16 Golfer Ernie
- 17 Recedes
- 18 Comment
- 20 End of a threat
- 22 Narc's org.
- 23 Mimic
- 24 "Funny!"
- 27 Novelty dance of the '50s
- 32 Comic Philips
- 33 Raw rock
- 34 — roll (winning)
- 35 Cowboy Cassidy
- 38 X-ray — (sci-fi glasses)
- 39 Lennon's lady
- 40 PC program
- 42 Unattached
- 45 Natural gift
- 49 Deal (with)
- 50 Swiss canton
- 52 Buffalo's county
- 53 MP's quarry
- 54 Gun the engine
- 55 Sicilian spouter

DOWN

- 57 Wine valley
- 57 Praise in verse
- 58 Close
- 3 Wander
- 30 Inseparable
- 1 Rude dude
- 2 Competent
- 3 Reno's state
- 5 Nursery game
- 6 Internet address
- 7 El —, Texas
- 8 Somnolent
- 9 Make the rounds at a restaurant
- 10 Priests' garments
- 11 Pedestal
- 19 Concerning
- 21 Campaigned
- 24 Sneaky chuckle
- 25 "I love," in Latin
- 26 Dr. Seuss book
- 28 Ornate vase
- 29 Pessimistic
- 31 Peace (Lat.)
- 36 Germany's
- 37 Texter's guffaw
- 38 Ill will
- 41 Dad
- 42 Read quickly
- 43 Hawkeyes' home
- 44 Modern money
- 46 Art Deco
- 47 master
- 47 Pinta's
- 49 companion
- 48 Eye drop
- 51 Flushed

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	I	E	D	T	A	J	A	B	E	L
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				S	I	S	I	G	E	T
W	A	T	T	I	N	F	O	E	V	E
A	G	E	C	A	P	E	R	S	I	T
D	A	S	E	M	U	S	O	T	I	S
			T	O	O	T	S	A	R	
R	E	C	U	S	E	D	A	T	E	S
E	R	A	S	R	O	A	D	T	E	S
F	I	S	T	I	R	S	E	A	S	E
S	E	E	S	C	O	P	D	R	O	P

7-2

CRYPTOQUIP

QLHTKLTNT QYEQ NYLHTX QZ
 UTHLWV AZD QZ HEMT AZDU
 XKLNA XTHZSLWE VLXY:

E NZDXNZDX NSZNM.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A SNAKE IS WRAPPING TIGHTLY AROUND ITS PREY, WOULD YOU CALL IT A CONSTRICTION WORKER?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals T

SCOREBOARD/SOCCER

Sports
on AFN

Go to the American Forces
Network website for the most
up-to-date TV schedules.
myafn.net

Deals

Tuesday's transactions

FOOTBALL
National Football League
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed QB
Cam Newton.

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Signed, OF
Heston Kjerstad to a minor league con-
tract.

DETROIT TIGERS — Agreed to terms
with 3B Spencer Korkelton on a minor
league contract.

ATLANTA BRUINS — Traded INF
Jorge Mateo to the San Diego Padres for
a player to be named later.

National League
COLORADO ROCKIES — Agreed to
terms with OF Matt Kemp on a minor
league contract. Placed CF Ian Desmond
on the restricted list.

NEW YORK METS — Signed RHP Jared
Hughes to a minor league contract.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League
ARIZONA COYOTES — Signed D Dysin
Mayo to a one-year, two-way contract.

Major League Soccer
LOS ANGELES GALAXY — Announced
the retirement of M Juninho Pernambu-
cano from professional soccer.
SEATTLE SOUNDERS — Signed M Shan-
don Hopeau.

Soccer

NWSL Challenge Cup

At Herriman Utah
Saturday, June 27
North Carolina Courage 2, Portland
Thorns 1
Chicago Red Stars 1, Washington
Spirit 2

Tuesday's results
Houston Dash 3, Utah Royals 3
OL Reign 0, Sky Blue 1
Wednesday's games
Portland Thorns vs. Chicago Red
Stars
Washington Spirit vs. North Carolina
Courage

Saturday's games
Utah Royals vs. Sky Blue
Houston Dash vs. OL Reign
Sunday's games
North Carolina Courage vs. Chicago
Red Stars
Portland Thorns vs. Washington Spirit

Wednesday, July 8
Utah Royals vs. OL Reign
Sky Blue vs. Houston Dash
Thursday, July 9
Washington Spirit vs. Houston Dash
Chicago Red Stars vs. Portland Thorns

Monday, July 13
OL Reign vs. Portland Thorns
Sky Blue vs. North Carolina Courage
Quarterfinals
Friday, July 17

Teams TBD
Saturday, July 18
Teams TBD
Semifinals
Wednesday, July 22

Quarterfinal winners
Championship
Sunday, July 26
Semifinal winners

Golf

PGA Tour FedEx Cup Leaders

Through June 28	Points	Money
Justin Simpson	1,583	\$4,029,300
Justin Thomas	1,543	\$4,552,727
1. Sungjae Im	1,531	\$4,060,915
2. Rory McIlroy	1,217	\$3,404,185
3. Patrick Reed	1,196	\$3,527,908
4. Brendon Todd	1,166	\$2,701,598
5. Daniel Berger	1,091	\$2,867,744
6. Marc Leishman	1,064	\$3,012,897
7. Lanto Griffin	1,047	\$2,729,739
8. Sebastian Munoz	1,034	\$2,425,633
9. Abraham Ancer	1,027	\$2,670,072
10. DeChambeau	1,014	\$3,148,709
11. Xander Schauffele	984	\$2,867,738
12. Kevin Na	977	\$2,034,345
13. Tyrrell Hatton	913	\$2,879,379
14. Hideki Matsuyama	894	\$1,695,988
15. Joaquin Niemann	836	\$2,454,823
16. Kevin Streelman	803	\$2,208,751
17. Cameron Smith	787	\$2,062,515
18. Cameron Champ	780	\$1,786,799
19. Collin Morikawa	747	\$1,918,049
20. Dustin Johnson	735	\$1,966,600
21. Scottie Scheffler	694	\$1,965,852
22. Jon Rahm	694	\$1,965,852
23. Nick Taylor	692	\$1,802,626
24. Adam Long	685	\$2,086,029
25. Harry English	678	\$1,772,311
26. Tom Hoge	672	\$1,751,275

Messi scores
700th career
goal in draw

By JOSEPH WILSON
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — Lionel Messi scored his 700th career goal for club and country before Atletico Madrid came back to draw 2-2 in the Spanish league on Tuesday and deal Barcelona's title hopes a major blow.

Barcelona's third draw in four rounds left it in second place, one point behind leader Real Madrid. Madrid hosts Getafe on Thursday with a chance to open up a four-point lead with five more matches remaining.

Barcelona was two points ahead of Madrid when the league was halted in March because of the coronavirus outbreak.

While Madrid has won five of five since the resumption after a three-month stoppage, Barcelona has only won three of six. The pressure is increasing on coach Quique Setien, who took over the team in midseason with the task of rekindling its attacking spirit.

"It is too bad because we keep dropping points and getting further and further away from the title," Setien said. "But we have to keep fighting."

Barcelona struck first in the 11th minute when Atletico striker Diego Costa inadvertently redirected a corner by Messi into his own net.

Costa's night got worse shortly after when his penalty was blocked by Marc-Andre ter Stegen. Atletico, however, got to re-take the spot kick when a video review determined that the Barcelona goalkeeper had moved off his line too early.

Saul Niguez stepped up instead of Costa on the second attempt and converted to level the score in the 19th.

Messi restored the host's lead in 56th by coolly scoring a penalty in the "Panenka" style, obliquely softy past goalie Jan Oblak. The goal was Messi's 630th club goal to go with his 70 for Argentina. It was also his league-leading 22nd goal of the season.



JOAN MONFORT/AP

FC Barcelona's Lionel Messi scored his 700th goal Tuesday in a Spanish La Liga match with Atletico Madrid at Camp Nou Stadium in Barcelona, Spain.



RICK BOWMER/AP

Most of the players for the Houston Dash take a knee for the national anthem prior to their game against the Utah Royals in the NWSL Challenge Cup at Zions Bank Stadium on Tuesday in Herriman, Utah.

Standing or kneeling, NWSL
players say support is there

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Chicago Red Stars teammates Julie Ertz and Casey Short say hard conversations over the past several weeks led to their vulnerability in the moment they shared an emotional embrace while they knelt during the national anthem as the NWSL opened its season.

Short sobbed as she was held by Ertz before Chicago's match against the Washington Spirit on Saturday night, the second game of the National Women's Soccer League tournament in Utah.

"Currently, every time the national anthem is played, our country continues to become more and more divided on what the visual symbol of unity looks like," Short and Ertz said in a joint statement they released Tuesday. "Through our continuous conversations we wanted to make sure that whatever we decided to do, it would not be an empty gesture. It would be a gesture that portrayed that we have heard those who needed to be heard, validated and loved."

"That moment during the anthem was difficult, very difficult. We are still searching but we are humbled by the outpouring of support."

Short was not made available for comment after the match, so the context of the moment wasn't known. Teammate Rachel Hill, who stood during the national anthem and put a hand on Short's shoulder, also was not made available for comment following the game.

"The two of us have always set out to be our honest and true selves, but have struggled to find the 'right' thing to do in order to show our truth. We understand people are entitled to their opinions. Often these opinions are presented through the individual's lens and do not accurately portray how the two of us truly

'I chose to stand because of what the flag inherently means to my military family members and me, but I 100 percent support my peers.'

Rachel Hill
Chicago Red Stars forward

feel," Short and Ertz said.

Hill posted a statement to Instagram on Tuesday night, saying the decision did not come easily. "Before the game, I was completely torn on what to do. I spoke with friends, family and teammates — of all races, religions and backgrounds — with the hope of guidance," Hill wrote. "I chose to stand because of what the flag inherently means to my military family members and me, but I 100 percent support my peers. Symbolically, I tried to show this with the placement of my hand on Casey's shoulder and bowing my head. I struggled, but felt that these actions showed my truth, and in the end I wanted to remain true to myself."

While it is customary that only starters are on the field during the anthem, the entire squads for the four teams that played Tuesday took the field before their games. Most, but not all, knelt.

Players and coaches have also worn Black Lives Matter T-shirts in warmups before games, and players have also knelt during a moment of silence before kickoffs.

The NWSL players association released a statement in support of all players, no matter their decision.

"The Players Association supports both making a clear statement that Black Lives Matter and each player making a personal decision around whether to stand or kneel during the national anthem," the union said.

Houston Dash 3, Utah Royals 3: Rookie Tziera King came off the bench and scored her first National Women's Soccer League goal Tuesday to pull the Utah Royals into a 3-3 draw with the Houston Dash in the Challenge Cup tournament.

Rachel Daly scored a pair of goals as the Dash built a 3-1 lead but the Royals came back with late goals from Vero Boquete and King in the match played without fans at Zions Bank Stadium.

Sky Blue 0, OL Reign 0: Sky Blue played to a scoreless draw with OL Reign in the tournament.

Sky Blue goalkeeper Kaitlen Sheridan leapt to stop Jaqueline Spencer's breakthrough attempt in the 85th minute, preserving the draw in the tournament opener for both teams.

The Reign are playing the Challenge Cup without Megan Rapinoe, who opted out of the tournament. Sky Blue is without national team players Carly Lloyd and Mallory Pugh because of injuries.

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Toronto	46	18	719	
x-Boston	41	23	672	3
Philadelphia	39	26	600	7½
Brooklyn	30	34	469	16
New York	21	45	318	26

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	41	24	631	—
Orlando	35	30	542	11
Washington	34	40	475	16½
Charlotte	23	42	354	18
Atlanta	20	47	299	22

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	40	24	625	—
Dallas	30	27	597	1½
Memphis	32	33	492	8½
New Orleans	28	36	438	12
San Antonio	27	36	429	12½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	43	22	662	—
Utah	41	23	641	1½
Oklahoma City	40	24	625	2½
Portland	37	27	579	4½
Minnesota	19	45	297	23½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-L.A. Lakers	44	18	778	—
L.A. Clippers	40	20	688	5½
Sacramento	28	36	438	12
Phoenix	26	39	400	24
Golden State	15	50	231	35

Schedule

Thursday, July 30

Utah vs. New Orleans	
L.A. Clippers vs. L.A. Lakers	

Friday, July 31

Orlando vs. Brooklyn	
Miami vs. Portland	
Phoenix vs. Washington	
Sacramento vs. Milwaukee	
Sacramento vs. San Antonio	
Houston vs. Dallas	

Saturday, Aug. 1

Miami vs. Denver	
Dallas vs. Oklahoma City	
New Orleans vs. L.A. Clippers	
Philadelphia vs. Indianapolis	
San Antonio vs. Toronto	

Sunday, Aug. 2

Washington vs. Brooklyn	
Portland vs. Boston	
San Antonio vs. Memphis	
Memphis vs. Orlando	
Milwaukee vs. Houston	
Dallas vs. Phoenix	

Monday, Aug. 3

Toronto vs. Miami	
Orlando vs. Oklahoma City	
Indianapolis vs. Washington	
Memphis vs. New Orleans	
L.A. Lakers vs. Philadelphia	
L.A. Lakers vs. Utah	

Tuesday, Aug. 4

Brooklyn vs. Milwaukee	
Dallas vs. Sacramento	
Phoenix vs. L.A. Clippers	
Orlando vs. Indianapolis	
Boston vs. Miami	
Houston vs. Portland	
Memphis vs. Utah	
Philadelphia vs. Washington	
Denver vs. San Antonio	
Oklahoma City vs. L.A. Lakers	
Brooklyn vs. Boston	

Wednesday, Aug. 5

Denver vs. San Antonio	
Phoenix vs. Philadelphia	
Portland vs. Dallas	
Boston vs. Memphis	
New Orleans vs. Sacramento	
Milwaukee vs. Washington	

Thursday, Aug. 6

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Friday, Aug. 7

Utah vs. San Antonio	
Oklahoma City vs. Memphis	
Sacramento vs. Brooklyn	
Orlando vs. Philadelphia	
Washington vs. New Orleans	
Boston vs. Toronto	

Saturday, Aug. 8

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Sunday, Aug. 9

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Monday, Aug. 10

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Tuesday, Aug. 11

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Wednesday, Aug. 12

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Thursday, Aug. 13

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Friday, Aug. 14

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Saturday, Aug. 15

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Sunday, Aug. 16

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Monday, Aug. 17

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Tuesday, Aug. 18

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Wednesday, Aug. 19

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Thursday, Aug. 20

Utah vs. Denver	
L.A. Lakers vs. Indianapolis	
Phoenix vs. Miami	
Milwaukee vs. Dallas	
Washington vs. Oklahoma City	
Memphis vs. Toronto	
San Antonio vs. New Orleans	
Orlando vs. Boston	
Philadelphia vs. Portland	
Houston vs. Sacramento	
Brooklyn vs. L.A. Clippers	

Positive tests force Nuggets to close practice facilities

By ARNIE STAPLETON

Associated Press

DENVER — The Denver Nuggets say they've closed their facilities after two members of the team's traveling party tested positive for the coronavirus over the weekend. A third tested positive this week.

All three are asymptomatic, the Nuggets said Tuesday in confirming a report by ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski.

The 35-member traveling party includes players, coaches and staff.

Also Tuesday, Pelicans general manager David Griffin said three New Orleans players have tested positive for COVID-19 and will be in self-isolation until testing shows they can return to team activities without infecting others.

It's unclear if the Nuggets will reopen their practice facilities before the team flies to Orlando on July 7 to resume the season that was halted in mid-March because of the virus, which has killed more than 128,000 people in the United States.

The 22 teams that will restart the season July 30 returned to their practice facilities last week and players, coaches and staff have been subject to ongoing testing as they prepare to resume the season.

A week ago, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press that Nuggets superstar center Nikola Jokic, one of only four players averaging 20 points and 10 rebounds, tested positive for the virus in Serbia,



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Nuggets center Nikola Jokic drives during a game in Denver in February. Jokic tested positive for the coronavirus in his native Serbia, but other members of the team's traveling party tested positive in Denver, prompting the team to close its practice facilities.

Nuggets coach Michael Malone revealed recently that he tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies and said he believes he had the virus in March.

When the season resumes July 30 at Disney's ESPN Wide World of Sports complex, the Nuggets will start with a 43-22 record, placing them 1½ games behind the second-place Los Angeles Clippers and 1½ games ahead of fourth-place Utah in the Western Conference playoff race.

In New Orleans, Griffin declined to identify the players who tested positive for the virus, citing medical privacy laws.

The positive tests occurred June 23, the first day all members of the Pelicans were tested as part of the NBA's plan to restart the season. Griffin said no Pelicans players have tested positive since.

AP sports writer Brett Martel contributed to this report.

2 Nets say they caught coronavirus in New York

By KRISTIAN WINFIELD

New York Daily News

NEW YORK — The Nets have two players who have recently tested positive for the coronavirus: Spencer Dinwiddie and DeAndre Jordan. Both believe it's the NBA's fault they contracted the virus.

"Originally, we were supposed to be one of the teams to enter into the Orlando bubble early, but training camp got switched back to New York and unfortunately I am now positive," Dinwiddie told The Athletic. "Given that I have experienced symptoms, including fever and chest tightness, it is unclear on whether or not I'll be able to participate in Orlando."

"Hindsight is 20/20." Jordan has announced he will not travel to Orlando for the 22-team resumption of the NBA season.

"Found out last night and confirmed again today that I've tested positive for Covid while being back in market," Jordan wrote on Twitter on June 29. "As a result of this, I will not be in Orlando for the resumption of the season."

The Nets were already short Kyrie Irving (shoulder), Kevin Durant (Achilles rehab), Wilson Chandler (family reasons) and rookie Nicolas Claxton (shoulder). Chandler, specifically, cited fears about

transmitting the coronavirus to his family as his reason for skipping the Orlando bubble.

Both Dinwiddie and Jordan blamed the NBA's waffling on training camp locations as a reason for their contracting the virus. The Nets ostensibly hoped they wouldn't need to return to New York City — an early coronavirus hotspot of the United States — before quarantining in Orlando.

Cases in New York state, though, have steadily declined since the coronavirus' single-day high of 11,571 cases on April 14. In fact, Dinwiddie and Jordan are two of just 616 positive cases in all of New York on June 28.

Originally, we were supposed to be one of the teams to enter into the Orlando bubble early, but training camp got switched back to New York and unfortunately I am now positive."

Spencer Dinwiddie

Nets players

The Nets aren't the only team experiencing an internal COVID-19 outbreak. The Denver Nuggets shut down their practice facility after "a round of positive coronavirus tests," according to ESPN. Nikola Jokic tested positive for the coronavirus after he was in Serbia, where he was photographed having a conversation with Novak Djokovic, the world's top-ranked men's tennis player who also tested positive.

Denver has had at least three positive coronavirus tests among players, coaches and staff, according to ESPN. The New Orleans Pelicans have had three members of their organization test positive for the coronavirus. They have chosen not to disclose the names.

The Sacramento Kings have also had three players test positive for COVID-19, according to The Athletic: starting shooting guard center Alex Len, and forward Jabari Parker.

The National Hockey League has also reported at least 26 coronavirus positive tests among their players.

For all sports leagues, more positive tests are expected in the coming days.

The NBA has been adamant about salvaging the remnants of its season since the season was first suspended on March 11. The 2019-20 season was shaping to be one

of the best in recent memory before the coronavirus pandemic rocked the world.

But the optics don't favor the league: The NBA is resuming its season in Florida, a state that has seen COVID-19 cases spike in recent weeks.

Only 8,800 of Florida's total 146,000 cases have come from Orlando, where the NBA will place its bubble. The NBA is going to ensure players isolate for at least 36 hours upon arrival in Orlando, until they can return consecutive negative coronavirus tests.

They will then be subject to regular COVID-19 testing, temperatures checks and other measures against the spread of the coronavirus in their bubble.

"We have a panel of scientists, doctors, experts that are working with us. We're going to see as we go. Certainly, if we have a lot of cases, we're going to stop," NBA commissioner Adam Silver said during Tuesday's TIME 100 Talks. "You cannot run this from this virus. I am absolutely convinced that it will be safer on this campus than off this campus, because there aren't many other situations I'm aware of where there's a mass testing of asymptomatic employees. So in some ways this is maybe a model for how other industries ultimately open."

BASEBALL

MLB injured list won't indicate if player has virus

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

Trying to find out the status of a baseball player coming back from an ankle injury definitely will be easier than learning whether someone tested positive for the coronavirus.

Major League Baseball said Tuesday that a team will not specifically announce a COVID-19 injured list placement for a player who is removed from the club after testing positive, just an IL trip.

MLB's operations manual says a positive test, exhibiting symptoms that require isolation for additional assessment or exposure to someone who has had the virus are cause for placement on the new COVID-19 IL.

It would be a speculating circumstance," Yankees general manager Brian Cashman told media during a conference call.

Baseball's collective bargaining agreement states that for any medical condition not related to employment, "a club may disclose only the fact that a medical condition is preventing the player from rendering services to the club and the anticipated length of the player's absence from the club."

Cashman noted the situation continues to evolve as MLB and the players' union continue discussions. Testing of players and staff began Wednesday as they reported to their teams to resume workouts. They will be tested once every two days.

Last week, Charlie Blackmon of the Colorado Rockies became the first MLB player known to have tested positive. According to reports, the All-Star outfielder worked at three Colorado players to have a positive test.

Numerous other teams have said they have players who have tested positive for the virus without identifying any of them. The Philadelphia Phillies announced seven, while the Detroit Tigers said one player who was living in Florida but not working out at the team's spring training facilities in Lakeland also tested positive.

Seattle Mariners general manager Jerry Dipoto said a few players have tested positive but declined to specify how many. Several Toronto Blue Jays players and staff members also have tested positive.

Mets general manager Brodie Van Wagenen said remaining educated about best practices is going to be crucial for everyone.

"Leadership really is going to be the difference-maker for the teams that are able to best handle this and best cope with the challenges that we face," he said.



DAVID ZALUBROWSKI/AP

Colorado Rockies right fielder Charlie Blackmon became the first player known to have tested positive for coronavirus, though he was one of three players on the Rockies to have a positive test, according to reports.

"And that really is the accountability that needs to be shared by all of us — not just baseball, but our whole society."

Baltimore general manager Mike Elias said the Orioles have had no reported cases.

"We recognize that this will be fluid and everyone is having to make personal decisions and circumstances might not be fully understood until the season starts, but so far we are expecting full participation," Elias said.

Marlins CEO Derek Jeter is hoping the return of baseball can provide some solace, much like the Yankees did when they returned after 9-11.

"We were thinking as players, 'Do we even play? What does it mean? We're playing a game.' Talking to family members who had lost family members and then thanking us — 'What are you thanking us for?' They said, 'We're thanking you because you're giving us something to cheer for. There haven't been too many happy days around here,'" Jeter said. "Baseball played a big role, at least in New York, in the healing process. It's not saying you're ever going to forget what happened. But at least for three hours a day we have the opportunity to give them something to cheer for. We hope that's the case here when we get going in a couple of weeks."

AP baseball writers Ronald Blum, Mike Fitzpatrick and Ben Walker, and AP sports writers David Ginsburg and Steven Wine contributed to this report.



CHARLIE NEIBERG/ALP

A cyclist rides past Principal Park, home to the Triple-A Iowa Cubs, on Thursday, in Des Moines. The minors officially canceled the 2020 season on Tuesday because of the pandemic.

It's official: Coronavirus wipes out minors for 2020

By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Baseball's minor leagues canceled their seasons Tuesday because of the coronavirus pandemic, and the head of their governing body said more than half of the 160 teams were in danger of failing without government assistance or private equity injections.

The National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, the minor league governing body founded in September 1901, made the long-expected announcement. The minors had never missed a season.

"We are a fans-in-the-stands business. We don't have national TV revenues," National Association president Pat O'Connor said during a digital news conference. "There was a conversation at one point: Well, can we play without fans? And that was one of the shortest conversations in the last six months. It just doesn't make any sense."

O'Connor estimated 85-90% of revenue was related to ticket money, concessions, parking and ballpark advertising. The minors drew 41.5 million fans last year for 176 teams in 15 leagues, averaging 4,044 fans per game.

MLB teams are planning for a 60-game regular season and most of their revenue will derive from broadcast money.

"I had a conversation with the commissioner, and we (were) unable to find a path that allowed us to play games," O'Connor said. "It wasn't an acrimonious decision on our part."

O'Connor said many minor league teams had received money through the federal Paycheck

“There was a conversation at one point: Well, can we play without fans? And that was one of the shortest conversations in the last six months. It just doesn't make any sense.”

Pat O'Connor
National Association president

Protection Program Flexibility Act.

"That was a Band-Aid on a hemorrhaging industry," he said. "Many of our clubs have gone through one, two, maybe three rounds of furloughs. In our office here, we've had varying levels of pay cuts between senior management, staff, and we've furloughed some individuals, as well, and are just about to enter in a second round of furloughs."

He hopes for passage of H.R. 7023, which would provide \$1 billion in 15-year federal loans from the Federal Reserve to businesses that had 2019 revenue of \$35 million or less and "have contractual obligations for making lease, rent, or bond payments for publicly owned sports facilities, museums, and community theaters."

In addition, the Professional Baseball Agreement between the majors and minors expires Sept. 30, and MLB has proposed reducing the minimum affiliates from 160 to 120.

"There's no question that what the pandemic has done is made us somewhat weaker economically," O'Connor said. "I don't think it's challenged our resolve. I don't think it's impacted our desire to stick together and get a good

deal." There have been substantive talks for about six weeks.

"There are very many teams that are not liquid, not solvent, not able to proceed under normal circumstances, and these are anything but normal circumstances given the PBA and the uncertainty of the future for some of these ballclubs," O'Connor said. "So I think the coronavirus has really cut into many clubs' ability to make it. And I think that we're looking at without some government intervention, without doing something to take on equity partners, you might be looking at half of the 160 who are going to have serious problems."

MLB already has told clubs to retain expanded 60-player pools, of which 30 players can be active during the first two weeks of the season starting in late July.

O'Connor said the financial impact of the pathogen might extend until 2023. "As serious as the threat from Major League Baseball was," O'Connor said, "this threat from the coronavirus, it transcends any list that anybody wants to make with respect to the possibility of teams not being around in the future."

MLB

Angels putting Ohtani back in two-way role

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Shohei Ohtani will resume his two-way career with the Los Angeles Angels when baseball returns.

Angels general manager Billy Eppler confirmed Tuesday that his Japanese star will pitch and hit in the majors this season.

Ohtani was only a designated hitter last season after undergoing Tommy John surgery. He wasn't expected to pitch in 2020 until at least May, and Eppler confirmed that the coronavirus pandemic hasn't altered the Angels' plans.

"We'll probably have a little bit more of a governor on him, at least at the outset," Eppler said. "He's had a number of live (throwing sessions against hitters), but we want to put that intensity a little bit more and put him into a game situation. Just watching how he responds on a day-to-day basis will help guide us to how much we can push down on the gas pedal on him. We're expecting him to be on the mound

and stay on the mound and roll through spring training."

Manager Joe Maddon said last week that he hoped Ohtani would start roughly once a week on the mound while serving as the Halos' designated hitter in 3-4 games between starts. The Angels could have a six-man rotation for the short season.

Ohtani batted .286 last season with 18 homers and 62 RBIs and an .848 OPS in 106 games. His production at the plate was nearly identical to his work in 2018, when he was the AL Rookie of the Year while making 10 starts on the mound.

Eppler said none of the Angels' players are currently intending to opt out of playing in the shortened season. That includes three-time AL MVP Mike Trout, whose wife is due with their first child later this summer.

Eppler confirmed that first-round pick Reid Detmers will be on the Angels' summer roster as the 56th player, although the left-handed starter hasn't officially yet been added.



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Shohei Ohtani batted .286 last season with 18 homers and 62 RBIs in 106 games. He served as the Angels' designated hitter while recovering from Tommy John surgery.

Eppler also went into details on the Angels' adherence to health and safety protocols at Angel Stadium and at Blair Field in Long Beach, where the Angels also will hold their summer camp. The Angels have removed communal couches and tables from their clubhouses in a bid to remind

their players of the new realities.

"Think of the clubhouse as more of a closet," said Eppler, who has received positive feedback from his players over their safety steps. "It's where clothes hang. Absent of anything you need to do in the training room or weight room, get outside."

Dark: No Blacks played in major leagues during Landis' tenure

FROM BACK PAGE

gambling, the sport's first commissioner and his legacy are "always a complicated story" that includes "documented racism," official MLB historian John Thorn said.

This much is true, in black and white: No Blacks played in the majors during his quarter-century tenure. Jackie Robinson broke the barrier in April 1947, about 2½ years after Landis died.

"Landis is a part of history, even though it was a dark history," Houston Astros manager Dusty Baker said.

Fact is, few fans realize Landis' name is plastered all over the Most Valuable Player trophies. Most people just call it the MVP.

But there it is, prominently displayed on every American League and NL MVP plaque since 1944 — Kennesaw Mountain Landis Memorial Baseball Award, in shiny, gold letters literally twice as big as those of the winner.

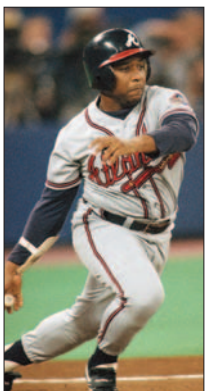
With a sizeable imprint of Landis' face, too.

To some MVPs, it's time for that 75-year run to end.

"If you're looking to expose individuals in baseball's history who promoted racism by continuing to close baseball's doors to men of color, Kenesaw Landis would be a candidate," three-time NL MVP Mike Schmidt of Philadelphia said.

"Looking back to baseball in the early 1900s that was the norm. It doesn't make it right, though," said the Hall of Famer, who is white. "Removing his name from the MVP trophy would expose the injustice of that era. I'd gladly replace the engraving on my trophies."

Added 1991 NL MVP Terry Pendleton of Atlanta, who is



The Atlanta Braves' Terry Pendleton, left, hits an RBI double against the Blue Jays during the first inning of Game 5 of the World Series on Oct. 22, 1992 in Toronto. Pendleton, the 1991 National League MVP, doesn't understand why the plaque, right, bears Landis' name. "It doesn't need a name."



RUSTY KENNEDY, LEFT, AND JENNIFER SZYMASZAK, RIGHT/AP

Black: "This is 2020 now and things have changed all around the world. It can change for the better."

"Statues are coming down, people are looking at monuments and memorials," he said. "We need to get to the bottom of things, to do what's right. Yes, maybe it is time to change the name."

"I've always thought about that, why is that still on there?" Pendleton said. "No doubt, MVP stands on its own. It doesn't need a name."

Many hallowed baseball trophies are graced by the names of the greats: Robinson, Hank Aaron, Roberto Clemente, Cy

Young, Willie Mays, Ted Williams and more.

How Landis got etched into the list is easy to trace.

A federal judge in Chicago, Landis quickly established his powerful authority as commissioner, banning Shoeless Joe Jackson and the Black Sox for throwing the 1919 World Series.

In 1931, Landis decided members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America would pick and present the MVP awards. Before that, the leagues had their own mishmash system.

Then during the 1944 World Series, the BBWAA voted to add Landis' name to the plaque as "an

acknowledgement of his relationship with the writers," longtime BBWAA secretary-treasurer Jack O'Connell said.

A month later, Landis died at 78. He soon was elected to the Hall of Fame.

"Landis is who he is. He was who he was," Thorn said. "I absolutely support the movement to remove Confederate monuments, and Landis was pretty damn near Confederate."

Landis' father, however, was a Union Army surgeon wounded in the Civil War at the battle of Kennesaw Mountain in Georgia, which became the inspiration for the commissioner's unique name.

Born two years later in Ohio — with a slight tweak on the spelling of the mountain — Landis spent time in Indiana and rose to prominence in Chicago.

His precise role in racial issues has been debated for decades.

Landis broke up exhibitions between Black and white All-Star teams. He invited a group of Black newspaper publishers to address owners in what became a cordial but totally fruitless presentation.

Toward the end of his tenure, he told owners they were free to sign Black players. But there is no evidence he pushed for baseball integration, either, as the status quo of segregation remained.

"If you have the Jackie Robinson Award and the Kennesaw Mountain Landis Award, you are at diametrically opposed poles," Thorn said. "And it does represent a conundrum."

O'Connell said no MVP had voiced a complaint to him about Landis since taking his post in 1994. He said Landis' name on the plaque wasn't pledged or part of the BBWAA constitution.

Any BBWAA member could raise an objection to Landis' presence. Normally, that would be discussed at the organization's next gathering, currently scheduled for December at the winter meetings in Dallas. The coronavirus pandemic has put most everything baseball-related in peril — a 60-game season is set to begin in late July, and MVPs are usually announced in November.

O'Connell said if someone raised the issue now, it could be brought up to the board and opened to discussion and a vote. To pull Landis' name "would be a simple matter of redesigning the plaque," he said.

To Larkin, that would remove the tarnish from the trophy.

SPORTS

**700th goal**Messi reaches milestone against Atletico Madrid » **Soccer, Page 20**

MLB

'A dark past'

MVPs want Landis' name off plaques

By BEN WALKER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK

SOMETHING STILL BOTHERS BARRY LARKIN ABOUT HIS MOST VALUABLE PLAYER AWARD.

THE OTHER NAME ENGRAVED ON THE TROPHY: KENESAW MOUNTAIN LANDIS.

"WHY IS IT ON THERE?" SAID LARKIN, THE BLACK

shortstop voted National League MVP in 1995 with the Cincinnati Reds.

"I was always aware of his name and what that meant to slowing the color line in Major League Baseball, of the racial injustice and inequality that Black players had to go through," the Hall of Famer said this week.

Hired in 1920 to help clean up rampant

SEE DARK ON PAGE 23



Landis



Reds shortstop Barry Larkin takes a curtain call after hitting a pinch-hit grand slam off the St. Louis Cardinals during the fifth inning on July 28, 2004 in Cincinnati.

DAVID KOHL / AP

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